

Like Magic  
by Dan Fiorella

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EXT. STONEHENGE/CIRC. 800 AD -- NIGHT

Stonehenge in it's heyday. It is the gathering place of the Council of Wizards, which is now in session. The white-clad and distinguished head wizard, ZOMAR, is sitting in judgment of the evil, dark and sinister wizard, MALADRAX. The entire community of 13 WIZARDS has turned out to watch the outcome of this trial with their assorted AIDES and SQUIRES. Each wizard has a pouch or container of some sort containing a deck of cards. At Zomar's bench is the ancient leather bound book of magic.

ZOMAR

Thou art found guilty, Maladrax.  
Thou hath overstepped thy bounds by attempting to enslave, rather than serve. We are here to help mankind through these dark times until man once again can re-civilize himself.

MALADRAX

Thou art fools, all! Zomar, we have the power! Why must we align ourselves with these humans, these, these creatures?

ZOMAR

It is not our place and our time here is finite. It is the ruling of this tribunal, this council of Wizards, that thou shalt be banished to the Nether Regions forever.

MALADRAX

The Nether Regions! Is this how thou doth treat one who has the vision, the desire to rise above these artificial constraints?

ZOMAR

So let it be done. Council?

The wizards rise as one. They each extract an identical card from their packs. It displays the international symbol for the Nether Regions with a phrase beneath.

WIZARDS

(as one)  
Kashecky.

The atmosphere turns ominous. A shaft of light entraps and binds Maladrax. He winces in pain at first and the energies increase in strength.

But with a final, defiant grin, he straightens up.

MALADRAX

We are not yet done, Zomar!

With a brilliant flash of light, Maladrax vanishes. The wizards are visibly spent from the effort. They return their cards to their decks. Zomar's PAGE, a young man (played by the actress who will play Gwen) helps Zomar with his dress cloaks.

PAGE

It is done, sire?

ZOMAR

It is done.

PAGE

Why art thy gloomy? It was a just sentence.

ZOMAR

For I have just sentenced myself to oversee and maintain the spell forever.

PAGE

Forever? How?

ZOMAR

How indeed.

PAGE

Cannot future wizards maintain the spell?

ZOMAR

Magic will not always be of this earth, squire. The wizards of present will soon retire and fade from the scene. Magic, alas, will not be as it was ---

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SOUTH STREET SEAPORT -- DAY

Pedestrian mall filled with TOURISTS. Street performers perform: a JUGGLER is juggling, a SINGER is singing, a MIME is miming. We next come across PETE JOHNSON and BENNY SMITH.

They are in the midst of their magic act involving a large wicker basket. They are dressed in magician's tuxedos. A semicircle of tourists semicircle them, watching. There is a small sign reading "Johnson the Astounding," to which someone has stapled a piece of paper reading "and Benny."

At the moment, Pete is talking to a Tourist, who is holding a playing card, the king of hearts.

PETE

--Now, armed only with my magical powers, I will now ascertain the hand in your hand like magic! And your card is...the six of clubs!

TOURIST

Ah, no. King of hearts.

Pete grabs the card.

PETE

Thanks for screwing up my trick. Now, for my next amazing trick---

Pete pulls six swords out of the basket. Benny applauds.

BENNY(CONT)

Amazing! Astounding!

PETE

Shut up. That wasn't the trick.

BENNY

No?

PETE

No.

BENNY

You sure?

PETE

Yes.

BENNY

'Cause it was better than that cheesy card trick.

PETE

Ladies and gentlemen, a new trick, the wicker basket of doom! Get in the basket...

BENNY

What trick is this?

PETE

The wicker basket of doom.

BENNY

That's just a figure of speech, right? Where'd you get that?

PETE

I just bought it. Go along, will you, please? It'll be great. Get in...

Pete starts to push him down into it.

PETE (CONT'D)

I will now run these razor sharp blades through this wicker basket!

BENNY

What?

PETE

I run these swords through the basket.

Benny steps out of basket.

BENNY

You didn't say anything about swords.

PETE

(brandishing sword)  
What'd you think this was?

BENNY

A letter opener?

PETE

Why would I have six?

BENNY

You get a lot of junk mail?

PETE

Get in the basket!

BENNY

Let me see that.  
(examining it)  
Hey, that's real!

PETE

Of course it's real!

BENNY

I thought this was a trick.

PETE

Will you please get in the basket!

BENNY

Let me get this straight: you're going to thrust this blade into this basket, like so...

He pierces basket, pulls it out and examines blade.

BENNY (CONT'D)  
You're about a quart low.

PETE  
Get in that basket!

BENNY  
No way. I could get hurt.

PETE  
No you won't. It's magic!

BENNY  
Now just hold on. You're going to  
put six swords into the basket with  
me in it and I'm not gonna get hurt?

PETE  
That's right.

BENNY  
Impossible! Can't be done.

PETE  
(exasperated)  
I can do it.

BENNY  
I bet you can't.

PETE  
How much?

BENNY  
(whipping out bill)  
Twenty dollars says you can't.

PETE  
(takes bill)  
You're on! Get in.

Benny gets in.

BENNY  
This is gonna be good.

PETE  
Squat down.

BENNY  
I hate to show you up like this in  
front of all these people, but boy,  
if you kill me, I'll never let you  
live it down. Ha!

Pete forces the lid down on Benny while it suddenly dawns on Benny what exactly he's gotten himself into. But it's too late, Pete closes and locks the lid in place. He turns on a tape recorder which plays some generic magic music, a la the "Ed Sullivan Show."

PETE

And now, Johnson the Astounding will pierce this ordinary wicker basket with these sharp, deadly swords!

BENNY(O.S.)

And not harm me!

PETE

(after-thought)

Yeah, right. Not harming him. The first blade!...

He inserts sword. There is a yelp from Benny. Pete looks shocked.

PETE (CONT'D)

You okay?

BENNY

The blade is cold!...

He puts in the next blade.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Ha, you missed me!

The third blade gets stuck going across. Pete tries hammering it in with his shoe.

PETE

(to Benny)

Sckootch over a bit...

There is some movement in the basket, then the blade enters smoothly. The fourth is inserted. It too jams up. With a mighty shove it passes through to the other side with Benny's underpants snagged on it. Pete sees it, grabs it and shoves it back in the basket. The fifth blade goes in with a sustained screech by Benny. Pete is poised over the top of the basket with the last sword.

PETE (CONT'D)

Now, the final blade!

BENNY

No! Not through the top!

He stabs it in. He takes a bow, then removes all the swords. Finally, he opens the lid and Benny pops up. His clothes are all shredded.

The audience is blankly taking this all in. Benny pulls out a top hat.

PETE

Now, kind folks, we pass the hat for a small token of your appreciation of our efforts...

As Benny goes around, most people turn and leave. Some put money in the hat. He joins Pete back at the basket.

PETE (CONT'D)

So, how'd we do?...

Benny reaches into the hat and pulls out a rabbit.

PETE (CONT'D)

How many times have I told you not to use that hat?

BENNY

Sorry. But fortunately there wasn't that much money in it.

PETE

Forget it. Let's pack up. There should be a good crowd at Battery Park.

BENNY

What's the deal putting in a new trick just like that?

PETE

Couldn't be helped. I just got the basket this morning. You've got to be flexible in this business, Benny, if you want to succeed. Got to be ready to go on a dime.

Benny is squirming a bit.

BENNY

Hey, Pete, where'd you get this basket anyway?

PETE

Picked it up second-hand from Amin the snake charmer.

BENNY

Oh, that explains it...

He reaches in his pants and pulls out a snake.

BENNY (CONT'D)

I thought I had company in there.



EXT. NIGHT CLUB -- DAY

Line of PERFORMERS waiting to audition for Open Mike Night. Benny and Pete in line. Benny is having an argument with a VENTRILOQUIST's dummy in line behind him. And losing.

INT. MAGIC SHOPPE -- DAY

They shop for tricks in this novelty store.

INT. AGENT'S OFFICE -- DAY

AGENT watches Pete wave his wand as Benny places a top hat on his desk. There is a puff of smoke, a flame appears, then the Agent's desk catches fire.

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Outside the Agent's office, Pete and Benny beat a hasty retreat from the blazing inferno which is now the Agent's office.

INT. BOOKING AGENT OFFICE -- DAY

Pete, Benny and TWO ACTRESSES are reading: Pete, Variety; Actress 1, Backstage; Actress 2, Show Business, and Benny; Cracked magazine.

EXT. STREET -- DAY

Curb-side, they are street performing the old saw of sawing the man in half trick. A TRAFFIC OFFICER issues them a summons for the illegally parked box at the expired meter.

INT. KID'S PARTY -- DAY

Benny is performing the shell game, hiding the ball under one of three cups. The KIDS keep finding it.

INT. BOOKING AGENT OFFICE -- DAY

Actress 1 sneezes. Benny pulls out a hanky to give her. Hankies keep coming out. Finally, they seize up. Benny starts pulling, and with a yank, pulls out the last item, a sock. Benny pulls up his pants legs to reveal a sock missing.

INT. NIGHTCLUB -- NIGHT

Pete and Benny on stage. Don't be too impressed, it's open mike night. Late night. Club's half empty and fading. Benny is in a magic cabinet, with his face sticking out the top, his hand out a slot in the middle and his foot out the bottom. Pete slides the middle section of the cabinet out, then returns it. He slaps Benny on the back, and the cabinet falls forward.

INT. UNEMPLOYMENT OFFICE -- DAY

Pete and Benny on line. Benny's nose is all bandaged and bruised.

EXT. STREET -- DAY

Older storefronts. Benny exits a health food store carrying a bag of groceries. Pete follows. They start walking. They're headed toward the bus depot.

PETE

I don't know how you can eat that stuff.

BENNY

Hey, I got a great deal on bean sprouts. They were factory seconds.

PETE

(not thrilled)

I'm thrilled. We're starving here and you're buying health food.

BENNY

What? You can't be healthy while you're starving?

PETE

Yeah, yeah. Now, as I was saying, I've got an idea for a trick that'll knock your eyes out!

BENNY

Really? What is it?

PETE

I knock your eyes out. Then maybe I make them float around or something. It'll be great.

BENNY

And how are you going to do that?

PETE

Magic.

BENNY

I dunno, Pete.

PETE

This is the kind of trick that'll make them forget all about David Cooperfield. We'll have our name in lights.

BENNY

The only way we're going to get our names in lights if we change them to "Walk, Don't Walk." Pete, why don't we just go back to the old act?

PETE

Plate spinning? The overhead was killing us.

BENNY

We could start with paper plates.

PETE

You gotta think big, Benny. We can't back down now. We just need something new and innovative. Then it'll happen. Television, Vegas, Pay-per-view. We'll be all set then.

BENNY

You think?

PETE

Think? I know it! I sense it. It's all about to come together for us, like magic.

They pass the bus depot entrance. Just leaving the depot is GWEN, dressed to obscure herself (and her purpose), pushing the wheelchair of the equally opaquely attired wizen old man, Zomar. They seem sinister. Zomar reaches beneath his cloak and pulls out a crystal on a necklace. It glows.

ZOMAR

(coughing)

It is here. I can feel it. Come, Gwendolyn, we must establish ourselves here and continue the search.

INT. T.V. STUDIO -- DAY

Small public access studio, manned by retirees and students. Cut-rate set for the Milton Abramovitz Show. Pete and Benny are in the wings, waiting to go on. Pete is less than happy. MILTON ABRAMOVITZ, a comic wannabe, mans a card table as his desk. There is a small studio AUDIENCE sitting on folding chairs.

BENNY

What? You said we should be on T.V.

PETE

Public access. I can't believe we're doing public access. From now on I'll handle the bookings.

BENNY

Why?

PETE

Why? Why? First you said you booked us into a dinner theater.

BENNY

Yeah?

PETE

It was a McDonald's.

BENNY

They enjoyed the show.

PETE

They paid us in happy meals. Then you said you had us lined up to play a college.

BENNY

Playing the college circuit will enhance our status.

PETE

It was a correspondence school! We had to play a post office box. Then you tell me we're going on cable T.V.

BENNY

Well, yeah---

PETE

And it turns out to be public access. Like public access is a big deal.

BENNY

A gig's a gig.

MILTON

Welcome back to the Milton Abramovitz show here on public access channel J. Thanks for joining us. Now, next up, we'd like to showcase some local talent, a magic act...

(reading index card)

Johnson the Astounding.

BENNY (O.S.)

And Benny!

MILTON

And Benny.

Milton watches as Pete and Benny come out and do their trick.

PETE

Thanks, Milt. Hello, folks. Let's get right to it. For my first amazing illusion, I will need three pieces of rope...

Benny wheels out a table with 3 pieces of rope and their top hat. Benny points out each item a la a game show hostess.

PETE (CONT'D)

Here I have three pieces of ordinary rope. Here, I have an ordinary magician's top hat. I now securely knot the three pieces of rope together...

He does so, as Benny points it out. He drops the rope into the hat.

PETE (CONT'D)

And now, the ropes will become unknotted, like magic! By a mere wave of the hand---

He waves his hand, reaches in and pulls out---a rabbit. He quickly hands it off to Benny.

PETE (CONT'D)

By a mere wave of the hand---

He waves his hand, until he lowers it into the hat. He now tries to untie the knots in the hat. He turns his back and starts using his teeth. Benny is still gesturing. Pete gets one piece of rope free and turns, displaying it.

PETE (CONT'D)

Viola! The first piece of rope magically freed!...

He turns to try the next piece. It won't budge.

PETE (CONT'D)

Well, you get the basic idea of the trick. Ta-da.

The audience is silent. Benny rolls off the table. He pulls out a blindfold and puts it on.

PETE (CONT'D)

For my next trick, I will need the assistance of a member of the audience. Benny, are you in the audience?

Benny is in the audience near a MAN and his WIFE.

BENNY

Why, yes I am, Johnson the Astounding!  
How did you know?

PETE

Magic! Now I will magically divine  
the identity of any ordinary objects  
you might have in your pocket.

BENNY

Sir, could you give me any small  
object you might happen to have on  
your person?

MAN

Uh, okay.

The Man stands. He gives Benny a key. Benny holds the key  
up.

BENNY

Okay, Johnson the Astounding, I have  
the object in my hand. Can you  
magically divine whether it is a key  
or not?

PETE

Why, yes, it **is** a key.

MAN

What is this? This guy's a fraud!  
There's nothing magic about that!

PETE

Uh, well, I'm not finished yet, sir.  
This key of yours, it's, ah, the key  
to your mistress' apartment.

WIFE

What?

MAN

No, it ain't! It's---

PETE

Yes, that's the key you use every  
Tuesday evening to visit that loose  
woman you're so obsessed with. Then  
you drop by your bookie's joint to  
pay off your weekly gambling debts.

WIFE

I thought you went bowling on  
Tuesdays.

MAN

He's nuts!

PETE

Then you top the night off by meeting your drinking buddies, the Mideast terrorists, and selling crack to school children.

MAN

That's the key to my garage!

WIFE

You vermin! I thought you went bowling!

Chaos ensues. The broadcast is cut off. A sign comes up announcing "Technical Difficulties."

INT. GREEN ROOM -- LATER

Pete and Benny are rushed out of the studio by some LARGE PEOPLE and Milton.

BENNY

Hey, I thought anyone could appear on public access!

MILTON

Go try Youtube!

They go back in studio.

BENNY

Wow, canceled off public access. How low have we gone? Maybe we should go back to waiting tables now, Pete?

PETE

How can you say that?

BENNY

You didn't have to fight off that Mideast drug dealer.

PETE

We're going to practice and practice until we're on top. We're going to work and sweat to hone this act. From the ashes of this day shall rise a phoenix!

BENNY

Yeah, I guess we did make ashes of ourselves.

PETE

C'mon.

BENNY

Where we going?

PETE

To find the perfect trick!

Suddenly, the studio audience bursts through the door.

MAN #2

There they are!

Benny and Pete are forced to flee.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

EXT. SAM'S MAGIC SHOPPE -- DAY

Pete & Benny approach this strange and musty-looking little shop.

PETE

Hey, here's a different shop.

INT. SAM'S MAGIC SHOPPE -- CONTINUOUS

Musty, old shop with assorted junk all around. SAM, a slightly crazed-looking old gent, is at the counter, polishing some knickknacks. Pete and Benny have their noses pressed up to the glass. They decide to enter.

PETE

Hi.

SAM

Good day, may I help you?

PETE

We're looking to buy a magic trick.

SAM

Oh, you would? What do you think this is, a magic store?

BENNY

Well, yes.

SAM

Proud of yourself, eh? Of course it's a magic store! That's why all these magic devices are here! Any moron knows it's a magic store! I knew it was a magic store! What did you think it was, a brothel?



PETE

A brothel?

SAM

Who told you that?

PETE

You just did.

SAM

Well, they never proved it, so there!

BENNY

Can we go now, Pete?

PETE

Look, we've been to every other magic shop and they have the same old tricks. Let's see what this guy has.

BENNY

I think he has a screw loose.

SAM

So you two practice the ancient art prestidigitation?

BENNY

No, we do magic.

SAM

Huh-uh.

PETE

We need a trick. We need *the* trick. An unique and daring trick that will separate us from the pack.

SAM

I have just the thing.

Sam checks behind counter and pulls out a suitcase-sized container containing a small crocodile.

PETE

What's that?

SAM

A pygmy crocodile.

BENNY

A what?

SAM

Crocodile. Pygmy crocodile.

PETE

How's a crocodile going to enhance our act?

SAM

Anyone else got a pygmy crocodile in their act?

PETE

No.

SAM

There you go!

BENNY

He's got a point.

PETE

If we're going to use an animal in the act, I would think we would want rabbits or doves.

SAM

Doves! Phooey. Snobby pigeons, that's all they are. If you really wanted doves, though, you could feed them to the crocodile. You have to keep them well fed so they don't leave the moat.

PETE

What moat?

SAM

What moat? Every crocodile owner has a moat. What's the point of owning a crocodile if you're not going to have a moat!

BENNY

I give up, what's the point?

PETE

We don't want a crocodile.

SAM

Fine, fine, no crocodile. Be that way. Let me show you this.

He puts away the case. He pulls out a cage with a puma in it.

BENNY

It's a mountain lion!

SAM

It is not.

PETE  
Then what is it?

SAM  
It's a puma!

BENNY  
What's a puma?

SAM  
A type of mountain lion.

PETE  
We don't want a mountain lion---

SAM  
--Puma---

PETE  
Puma! Now can we seriously consider  
a real magic device, please?

Sam slides the puma away. He drops to behind the counter. As he does, Benny catches the glint of light off a crystal ball at the end of the counter. Beside it a pouch containing a set of the wizard cards along with some exotic clothing and robes. Benny goes over to the crystal ball. He starts to turn back, but something catches his eye. The crystal ball begins to display some images, then focuses in on a view of the Nether Regions and the Stonehedge. Sam pops back up holding a rock.

SAM  
Here you go.

PETE  
What?

SAM  
Your new act.

PETE  
It's a rock.

SAM  
Of course it's a rock. It's a magic  
rock.

PETE  
A magic rock.

SAM  
Look at the tricks it can do! It  
can sit up!  
(he tilts rock up)  
It can roll over!  
(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)  
 (he rolls the rock)  
 It can play dead. It does that best.

PETE  
 Aah, ya. No, thanks.

SAM  
 It also knows how to handle hecklers.

PETE  
 How can a rock handle hecklers?

SAM  
 Easy, simply point out the heckler  
 to the rock and the throw it at them!

Sam mimes throwing the rock at Benny. Benny is mesmerized by the crystal and falls into a trance. Pete notices the other stuff.

PETE  
 Nice stuff. Where'd you get it?  
 What's this, a deck of cards?

SAM  
 Got it at auction. Some old guy's  
 estate was sold off. Thought it  
 looked interesting.

Pete takes the cards.

PETE  
 This is different looking. Was the  
 old guy a magician?

SAM  
 That's what somebody said. I just  
 bought the stuff.

PETE  
 See, look, they're labeled  
 invisibility, metamorphosis,  
 animation, levitation.

SAM  
 What can I say? Would make a great  
 prop. It's no rock---

PETE  
 Yeah. It would. How much?

SAM  
 Thirty.

PETE  
 Thirty?

SAM  
Thirty-five?

PETE  
Thirty-five??

SAM  
Okay, twenty. And I throw in the  
rock.

PETE  
Deal. Benny, pay the man. Benny?...

Benny is still gazing into the crystal. Suddenly, the face of Maladrax, the evil wizard of lore, appears in the crystal. Benny is scared and jumps with a start.

PETE (CONT'D)  
Yo, Benny boy, snap to it.

BENNY  
Huh? What?

PETE  
Give'em twenty-five dollars.

BENNY  
What for?

PETE  
These cards. I bought these cards.

BENNY  
Oh. Okay.

SAM  
Nice crystal ball. Interested?

BENNY  
No. No, crystal ball.

He gives Pete some money, takes his groceries and walks out. Pete shrugs, pays Sam and takes the cards and rock. He leaves.

EXT. STREET -- MOMENTS LATER

Pete catches up to Benny.

PETE  
Ben, you okay?

BENNY  
I dunno, my mind's ablank.

PETE  
Yeah, but you okay?

BENNY  
Huh? Yeah, okay.

And they're gone.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Pete and Benny's apartment. Benny is pulling a vacuum cleaner out of a closet. Pete is sorting through the cards.

PETE  
These cards are really going to jazz  
up my card tricks.

BENNY  
Miles Davis couldn't jazz up your  
card tricks.

Benny starts the vacuum.

PETE  
Whoa, whoa, what are you doing?

BENNY  
I'm vacuuming.

PETE  
Do you have to do that now? I'm  
trying to study this.

BENNY  
It's got to be done. The dust bunnies  
are now dust kangaroos.

PETE  
Fine, fine, I'll be in the kitchen.

Pete leaves with the cards.

BENNY  
Thanks.

He begins vacuuming anew.

INT. KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Pete sits at kitchen table. He begins a solitaire-like sorting of the cards.

PETE  
Got it, got it, double, double.  
(he stops at one card)  
Vitelli. Vitelli?

He repeats the phrase, concentrating, trying to memorize the phrase, holding the card away from himself.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

As Benny attempts vacuuming under the couch, it begins to slowly rise. Not noticing, he simply vacuums further and further underneath as it rises. Finally, he is standing right under it.

BENNY

Thanks...

He vacuums a few more moments, then realizes the couch is floating.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Pete!

INT. KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Pete is disturbed by Benny's call. A thud is heard from the living room. Pete gets up and hurries into--:

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

--to see Benny trapped under the now earth-bound couch.

BENNY

Pete!

PETE

What are you doing?

He helps him out.

BENNY

I was vacuuming under the couch---

PETE

Why must you turn everything into a project?

BENNY

The couch, it was up in the air.

PETE

And?

BENNY

Then it wasn't.

PETE

The couch was in the air.

BENNY

Yes.

PETE

Couches don't float in the air!

BENNY

Sure, as a rule.

PETE

I want to learn this new stuff so we can use it in the act tomorrow. So, please keep it down.

He exits into the kitchen. Benny eyes the couch suspiciously.

BENNY

If I could keep it down, I wouldn't have to call you.

He waves his arm around the couch, checks the ceiling, and walks around it, looking for wires or something. Shaking his head, he sits on it.

INT. KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Pete goes back to sorting and finds another "Vitelli" card. He places it on the table with the first one.

PETE

Vitelli.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The couch slowly begins to rise again. It slowly dawns on Benny that the couch is rising. He yelps then leaps off.

BENNY

Pete!...

The couch drops back to the floor just as Pete enters. Benny is pointing in the air to where the couch was.

Pete looks up. Benny looks skyward, then corrects his pointing to the gravity-stricken couch.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Ah-ha! There it is.

PETE

Why, was it sneaking up on you?

BENNY

Did you ever! What is that thing, stuffed with feathers?

PETE

I don't know. Why?

BENNY

'Cause I think they're still attached to the bird. I can't keep this down!



PETE

Will you please stop playing these games? I have work to do, you have work to do. We still have to rehearse. So, if it's not too much trouble, may I be permitted to have a few moments of peace so I can study my lines? Is that too much to ask?

BENNY

Okay, but you're too slow! Next time you gotta be quicker!

PETE

There will be no next time! Now let me do my work, please.

Pete goes into kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Pete finds a third "Vitelli" levitation card.

PETE

Vitelli.

Suddenly Benny comes running in, grabs Pete and quickly drags him out to the living room. A moment later they walk back into the kitchen. It happened again. Benny is totally befuddled, Pete's just P.O.ed. Benny goes to say something, but Pete just points to the door. Failing to come up with an adequate defense, Benny leaves. Pete returns to the cards.

A vanishing card catches his eye.

PETE (CONT'D)

Chironna.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Benny goes to the vacuum, decides against it. Lost in thought, he goes to sit on couch, thinks better of it, so he pulls over a chair to sit and watch the couch.

BENNY

So, float!

He blows at it. The chair under Benny disappears and Benny falls. He gets up and turns to see the chair reappear, then disappear again.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Must be an occasional chair...

He jumps onto the couch.

INT. KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Pete is comparing a levitation card to a vanishing card.

PETE  
Vitelli. Chironna.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The couch starts rising again. When it gets up there, it disappears and Benny falls to the floor. The couch reappears and falls onto him.

INT. KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Benny comes running in wearing a football helmet and carrying a bat.

PETE  
You finished cleaning?

BENNY  
Can we move?

PETE  
What are you talking about?

BENNY  
I was sitting in that chair, 'cause  
I didn't trust the floating couch,  
and it disappeared, and then the  
couch attacked---  
(he pauses)

PETE  
Yes?

BENNY  
Never mind.

PETE  
Never mind?

BENNY  
Yeah. As I'm explaining this, I  
don't believe it and I was there!

INT. SAM'S MAGIC SHOPPE -- DAY

Sam is now polishing some bric-a-brac. Gwen, still looking mysterious in dark glasses and kerchief, enters.

GWEN  
Hello.

SAM  
Hi, may I help you?

GWEN  
I'm looking for a certain magic item.

SAM  
So? What do you want from me?

GWEN  
This is a magic shop.

SAM  
Where'd you get that idea?

GWEN  
From the sign on the door.

SAM  
Don't you know you can't believe  
everything you read!

GWEN  
What makes you say that?

SAM  
I read it somewhere.

GWEN  
You've recently obtained some articles  
from the Marestone estate?

SAM  
Marestone, that old guy with all the  
crystals, right?

GWEN  
Are they available for purchase?

SAM  
Only for cash. You got any?

She nods and he brings her over to the end of counter and shows her the items. Gwen is affected. Then she looks the items over.

GWEN  
I'm looking for the pouch of cards.

SAM  
Pouch of cards?

GWEN  
Yes, pouch of cards.

SAM  
A pouch with cards in it?

GWEN  
Yes, yes. You have them?

SAM  
Sold 'em yesterday.

GWEN  
Who bought them?

SAM  
Some new customers, why?

GWEN  
It is urgent I speak with them. I must have those cards. It is very important.

SAM  
I knew it! Collectables! Nuts, I sold them for twenty-five dollars! What are you, related to this Marestone guy?

GWEN  
No, no. He is a---friend of my---family. Is there a way to contact these two men?

SAM  
Nah, they paid in cash. You could leave your name with me, honey. When they come in again, I'll pass it along.

GWEN  
So be it. I will take the crystal, though.

SAM  
Sure. How about the clothes?

GWEN  
No, they are powerless for anyone but Marestone.  
(takes out change pouch)  
How much for the crystal?

SAM  
We'll talk. Need any rocks?

EXT. RUN-DOWN NEIGHBORHOOD -- DAY

Row of older brownstones. Gwen, carrying her booty, enters one.

INT. BROWNSTONE -- DAY

Dank, dusty, dim and other "d" adjectives abound. Gwen hangs her coat up and carries the crystal ball upstairs.

INT. ZOMAR'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Very dark room. Shades drawn. Zomar is in his wheelchair, obscured by shadows. Gwen enters.

ZOMAR

Were they there?

GWEN

They were, but they were sold. I did get Marestone's crystal, though. I thought maybe a seeing spell could be cast.

ZOMAR

I am not certain I am up to the task.

GWEN

But you must.

She brings it over. He fumbles and tries to pull out one of his cards. Gwen helps him.

ZOMAR

Marestone bala lund. Marestone---  
(starts coughing)

GWEN

Mazella kish.

He coughs and waves his arm. The crystal begins to glow. In the crystal appear Benny and Pete in their apartment, rehearsing. They are handcuffed together. Pete is holding the deck of cards.

PETE

What do you mean you swallowed the key?

Zomar begins coughing again. The ball goes dark.

GWEN

It is they! They have the cards! A simple tracing potion should lead me to them. I shall commence at once! I hope we can reach them before anything happens!

She hurries out. Zomar takes a coughing fit.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK -- DAY

Pete and Benny approach the open space under the arch. They push their magic cabinet with them. MIKE THE MIME is there, working the crowd, annoying passers-by. He is pretending to do a tight rope act.

PETE

He's in our spot. Get rid of him.

As Pete sets up, removing props and the cards from the cabinet, Benny approaches Mike.

BENNY

Hey you, this is our space. Get lost.

MIKE THE MIME

(quietly)

!

BENNY

Says you!...

Mime then makes a face and continues with his balancing act.

BENNY (CONT'D)

I said this is our space...

He pushes Mike off the tightrope. Mike gets up, starts to leave, but bumps into one of those invisible walls they're always having trouble with. Then he mimes the other three walls and he's in a room. When he faces Benny again, he mimes a doorknob and a stuck door.

BENNY (CONT'D)

What?...

Benny raises his hand to feel the door, and Mike meets Benny's palm with his own.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Well, you can't stay in there! Get out!

MIKE THE MIME

(shaking head no.)

?

BENNY

Look you!...

He starts to go after Mike, remembers the door, then opens it and steps in. Mike exits through the "back door" in the opposite wall, closing it behind him and locking it. Benny is now in the box. Mike swallows the key and dashes off.

BENNY (CONT'D)

And stay out! Hey, wait a second, how do I get out? I'm trapped! The air's getting thin! I'm running out of oxygen. Pete! Help, help me!

(MORE)

BENNY (CONT'D)

The walls are closing in! Can't breathe!

He drops to the ground. Pete wanders over.

PETE

What are you doing?

BENNY

I'm trapped in the mime's box!...

Pete grabs him by the collar and lifts him out.

BENNY (CONT'D)

You saved me! Thank you.

He hugs him.

PETE

Get to work.

They return to setting up.

A little later: A CROWD has gathered watching Pete and Benny in mid-act. Pete is holding the magic connecting rings in a row. There is applause. He hands the rings to Benny, who promptly drops them and they all roll away separately. Pete goes to the cabinet.

PETE (CONT'D)

And now, ladies and gentlemen, I shall attempt to harness the magical powers of the astounding disappearing cabinet. This cabinet was given me by the Incas in Peru.

HECKLER

But the Incas are all gone.

BENNY

So you know it really works.

PETE

My assistant will now place himself into the cabinet...

Benny steps into the cabinet. He shuts the curtain.

PETE (CONT'D)

I close the box, wave the wand and presto---!

He opens the curtain and Benny is there.

BENNY

I need a quarter.

PETE

For what?

BENNY

I figured I'd make a call while I'm  
in there.

Pete pushes him in the cabinet. He shuts the curtain.

PETE

Now then, I close the box, wave the  
wand and presto---!...

He opens the curtain. Benny is standing there.

PETE (CONT'D)

What are you doing there?

BENNY

What are you? An exit poll? Please,  
I'm still voting.

PETE

Will you disappear?

BENNY

Sorry.

Pete closes the curtain.

PETE

Well, perhaps while we're waiting  
for him to disappear, I can do a new  
card trick...

He puts out the wizard cards and begins to shuffle them, he  
cuts the deck and displays the Nether Regions card.

PETE (CONT'D)

A rare and wonderful card---

HECKLER

Also from the Incas?

PETE

(reading card)  
Kashecky.

The sky darkens. Something big is going on.

EXT. NETHER REGIONS -- DUSK

The cold, barren, rocky wasteland. A bleak-looking castle  
can be seen against the horizon. Suddenly, Benny appears.  
He's in a semi-crouch, as he was in the middle of climbing  
into the secret panel of the cabinet.



BENNY

I hate this trick. Bad enough with  
that basket, but squeezing in back  
here---is---claustrophobic...

It finally sinks in that he's not in the back of the cabinet  
and he realizes where he is, or rather, isn't.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Oh boy. He really did it this time.  
Pete! Yo, Petey boy, where'd you  
go?..

He starts to walk around cautiously.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Where'd everybody go?...

He approaches a giant outcropping of rocks.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Pete! What did you do to me now?...

He looks around. From behind the rocks, a bevy of odd  
CREATURES, including A GOBLIN, poke their heads up.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Pete!...

Benny sees the castle in the distance.

BENNY (CONT'D)

What is this place and how do I get  
from it?...

He sits on what he thinks is another rock outcropping. He's  
wrong. It is, in fact, a sleeping TROLL. The Troll wakes  
up and sits up, towering over Benny.

BENNY (CONT'D)

This sure ain't Kansas...  
(upon seeing Troll)  
And you ain't Toto! Pete!

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK -- DAY

Pete is annoyed at the card trick, taking the card back from  
an Onlooker.

PETE

No, there isn't even a queen of hearts  
in the deck! Your card was supposed  
to be this one. Kashecky!

EXT. NETHER REGIONS -- DUSK

Benny is up and backing away from the Troll. He comes up to the rocks. He turns and comes face-to-face with the Goblin. Benny screams anew. He wants to get free of the Troll. He calls for Pete. It's a Troll-free call. It works, 'cause he disappears. The Goblin blinks in amazement, then quickly hobbles off to the castle. The Troll scratches his head in befuddlement.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK -- DAY

Benny comes stumbling out of the box.

BENNY

Pete!

PETE

Aren't you gone yet?

BENNY

I've been gone and back!

Audience disperses.

PETE

You missed your cue.

BENNY

Cue? What cue? What did you do to me?

PETE

What are you talking about?

EXT. NETHER REGIONS -- DUSK

The castle is in view.

INT. MALADRAX'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The Goblin is before Maladrax, the evil wizard, who looks much the same from the day of his banishment, only rougher and meaner. The Goblin whispers to Maladrax.

MALADRAX

What do you mean someone's been here?...

The Goblin points off.

MALADRAX (CONT'D)

A human? In the Nether Regions? Impossible. No one has been able to cross the barriers since---Could it be, after all these centuries, the spell has been lifted?...

He goes to a cabinet and pulls out his card deck. He displays a transport card and holds it forth.

MALADRAX (CONT'D)

Desroches!...

A flash of light, a puff of smoke, but Maladrax isn't going anywhere.

MALADRAX (CONT'D)

As I thought. For some reason, some wizard has breeched the void. But who? And why?

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK -- DAY

Pete and Benny are still arguing.

PETE

Why can't you just admit you messed up the trick?

BENNY

I didn't. I was in this strange place with monsters and stuff. What were you doing?

PETE

I was doing a card trick.

BENNY

With those cards? I knew there was something weird about them!

PETE

What are you saying? This card made you disappear?

He holds up a card, Benny flinches. After a moment he realizes he's still there.

BENNY

Maybe not that one.

PETE

Oh, maybe it was this Kashecky one.

He pulls the card. Benny disappears. Pete looks around, then at the card.

PETE (CONT'D)

Kashecky.

A startled Benny reappears.

PETE (CONT'D)

What happened to you?

BENNY

I don't know.

PETE

Where'd you go?

BENNY

I don't know.

PETE

What do you know?

BENNY

I know I'm not doing that trick again.

PETE

The trick? Stay there.  
 (he holds the card  
 out)  
 Kashecky!...

Benny disappears.

PETE (CONT'D)

Benny?

EXT. NETHER REGIONS -- DUSK

Benny appears. The Troll sees him and turns for him. Benny then disappears. The Troll, confused, looks around. Benny re-appears. The Troll tries to get him again. Benny disappears again.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK -- DAY

Benny appears in front of Pete. Benny grabs Pete by the lapels.

BENNY

Cut it out!

PETE

Benny, you really disappeared!

BENNY

Tell me about it.

PETE

Do you realize what this means?  
 This is magic! Real magic! We can  
 be the greatest magicians ever!  
 Everyone else uses tricks. We'll  
 have real magic. This is incredible!  
 Man, we'll be bigger than David  
 Copperpot!

BENNY

Pete---

PETE

This is our ticket to the top, kid.  
Fame, fortune, it's ours! Ours! Oh  
I can't wait to start spending our  
fortune.

He shoves Benny into the cabinet.

PETE (CONT'D)

Hey, everyone, check this out!

BENNY

No, Pete, don't do it---

PETE

Kashecky!

He opens the cabinet and Benny is gone.

EXT. NETHER REGIONS -- DUSK

Benny appears.

BENNY

---Don't do it! He did it. Why  
doesn't he ever listen to me?

Benny turns and winds up face to face (approximately) with  
Maladrax.

MALADRAX

So, you have returned.

BENNY

Who are you? Where am I?

MALADRAX

I am Maladrax of Oslot and this is  
called the Nether Regions. What is  
your name, wizard? And why are you  
here?

BENNY

Wizard? I'm, er,---wizard, huh?

Maladrax places a hand on Benny's shoulder.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK -- DAY

PETE

Oh, man, what a great investment  
these cards turned out to be!  
Kashecky!

Nothing happens.

PETE (CONT'D)

Oh-oh.

Pete repeats himself. Still nothing. He starts holding up other cards and reading them aloud. One card has a symbol of a doorway and he reads that.

PETE (CONT'D)

Pavis.

The magic cabinet becomes a doorway to the Nether Regions. He can see the landscape.

PETE (CONT'D)

Benny?

EXT. NETHER REGIONS -- DUSK

Maladrax is holding Benny by the shoulders.

MALADRAX

I say again, wizard, who are you?

BENNY

Yes, well, I am---Oz, the great and powerful. I am the wonderful wizard of Oz.

Benny hears Pete calling him. He turns to see a doorway in space which leads to the park.

MALADRAX

I recall no wizard of Oz.

BENNY

Well, sure, I'm one of the recent league expansion wizards...

Suddenly, he points off to behind Maladrax.

BENNY (CONT'D)

No, pay no attention to that man behind those curtains!

Maladrax turns to see, releasing Benny in the process. Benny makes a dash for the doorway. Maladrax recovers and gives chase. Benny reaches the door and dives through.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK -- DAY

Benny comes flying in through the door, landing on the ground. He gets up and grabs Pete.

BENNY

Don't you ever do that again!

Slowly the door begins to close. But before it closes Maladrax's hands reach out and grabs and pushes open the edges for the doorway enough to allow himself through. Then the door slams shut behind them. Maladrax now straightens up to his full height.

PETE

What was that all about? Who's he?

BENNY

Maladrax of Oslot, Pete; Pete,  
Maladrax of Oslot.

MALDRAX

Zounds! At last I art free! Wizard  
of Oz, I am in your debt!

PETE

Oz?

Benny shrugs.

MALADRAX

Is this your apprentice?

PETE

Apprentice? Apprentice-schmentice,  
we're partners.

MALDRAX

Tandem wizards, most unusual in my  
day. What time is this?

BENNY

(checks watch)  
About half past three---

MALADRAX

Nay, the century, what century is  
this.

PETE

Twenty-first. Just who are you  
anyway?

MALDRAX

I am Maladrax of Oslot, wizard  
supreme, at your service, sire.

PETE

Wizard? You're a wizard?

BENNY

Ain't that a kick in the head?

MALADRAX

What manner of wizards art thou?

BENNY

Who? Us?

PETE

Fellow wizards call us Pete and Benny.  
Now then, you said we freed you.  
From where?

MALADRAX

Why, the Nether Regions.

BENNY

What's the Nether Regions?

MALADRAX

You do not know of the Nether Regions?

PETE

Refresh our memories.

MALADRAX

It is a desolate place, neither here  
nor there. A prison of magic not of  
this world.

PETE

What were you doing there?

MALADRAX

My enemies, jealous of my talents,  
rose against me and banished me there.

PETE

So, you're on the level about this  
wizard stuff?

MALADRAX

I beg your pardon?

PETE

You're really a real wizard?

MALADRAX

I am.

Pete pulls Benny aside into a huddle.

PETE

Did you hear that? This guy's a  
real wizard!

BENNY

What did I say?

PETE

Do you realize what this means?



BENNY

We're in over our heads again?

PETE

This is it, man! The big time!  
We've now got the magic business  
locked up. We got ourselves a wizard.

BENNY

Pete---

PETE

This is our chance. The break we've  
been waiting for! This is opportunity  
knocking!

BENNY

Well, I don't want to knock  
opportunity, but I got a bad feeling  
about this. I mean, look at this  
guy---I don't trust him.

PETE

It's under control.

BENNY

You don't even know this guy.

PETE

I'll get him to do something.

BENNY

You're gonna ask him to audition?

PETE

Shh.

(to Maladrax)

So, Mr. Maladrax, do you still have  
your powers?

BENNY

Could you do something wizical?

Maladrax sizes up the situation, then pulls a card out and  
waves it across the sky, creating a rainbow. The guys seem  
impressed.

MALADRAX

And what powers are at your command?

PETE

Oh. What? Besides freeing you?

MALADRAX

Yes.

Benny and Pete fidget a bit, then, while nervously fidgeting, Benny tugs at his sleeve and produces a bouquet of flowers. They are as surprised as Maladrax.

BENNY

Huh? Oh. Ta-da!

Maladrax takes flowers.

MALADRAX

Interesting. Wait, these flowers are not real.

PETE

Oh, sure, anyone can make real flowers.

BENNY

These are artificial.

PETE

Very unique.

MALADRAX

You have much to teach me of your world and your ways. It will be an honor to learn from master wizards as yourself.

PETE

C'mon then. Benny, please, get the supplies.

BENNY

Excuse me, master wizard.

(aside)

Just what are you planning to teach him?

PETE

It's covered.

They head off.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING -- DAY

Their apartment building. Maladrax is looking up at the buildings.

MALADRAX

Zounds! How high they build their castles these days! But so close to together. Where do you work the land? Where are your serfs?

BENNY

California.

They reach the front door. There are automatic doors. Pete waves his hands magically, as he steps on the mat and the doors open.

INT. LOBBY -- DAY

Pete reaches the elevator and leans against the button, not letting Maladrax see. The doors open.

INT. ELEVATOR -- CONTINUOUS

They step in, with Pete quickly pressing their floor before Maladrax enters. They all get in. Doors close. Pete snaps his fingers and the doors open on their floor.

INT. APARTMENT -- MOMENTS LATER

They enter. Pete grabs the T.V. remote, palming it.

PETE

So, what can I show you about modern times?

MALADRAX

I want to know it all!

PETE

Well then, let's watch the magic screen, shall we?

He clicks on the set. Maladrax is startled. He examines the screen.

MALADRAX

Amazing!...

Pete runs through the stations: news, game shows, movies, commercials, a King Arthur movie.

MALADRAX (CONT'D)

This is miraculous!

BENNY

It's never been called that. Everyone just calls it a vast wasteland.

MALADRAX

Everyone?

PETE

(changing subject)  
Hungry, Mal?

MALDRAX

Quite.

Pete heads into the kitchen, followed by the others.

INT. KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Pete slides a T.V. dinner into a microwave. He waves his hands and pulls out the cooked meal. He goes to the blender, pours in milk, cocoa and ice cream and turns it on, then pours out a milk shake.

PETE

(aside)

I'll have him eating out of our hands  
in no time.

BENNY

Let him use plates, Pete.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAY

On the T.V. comes the show "The Loch Ness Monster: We've got him now!" Brash reporter, CHIP MCCLEAN stands beside a bathysphere.

CHIP

Yes, tonight in just a few more  
minutes we will send our intrepid  
explorer down into the depths of  
Loch Ness with a video camera and at  
last obtain proof of the of the  
existences of Nessie the Sea Monster.

MALDRAX

Are they still looking for her?

It's a little later. Maladrax is eating microwave popcorn. The T.V. plays "Living Large" exalting some rich guy and his mansion.

BENNY

(aside)

You're overdoing it a bit, aren't  
you?

PETE

I gotta make it look good, so he'll  
show us magic in exchange.

MALADRAX

(indicating apartment)

Are these your lodgings?

PETE

Yeah.

MALADRAX

They are modest for a wizard, are  
they not?

BENNY  
It's rent controlled!

PETE  
Wizardry doesn't pay much these days.

MALADRAX  
Does not the king provide for you?

PETE  
No kings in America. A guy's gotta  
make do on his own.

MALADRAX  
No kings? Then who rules?

BENNY  
Whoever the people pick.

PETE  
We're a democracy.

MALADRAX  
As wizards, you hold no allegiance  
to the crown?

BENNY  
No. We're freelance.

MALADRAX  
This interests me.

Maladrax ponders this, while Benny ponders Maladrax. Pete's eyes register dollar signs.

INT. KITCHEN -- DAY

Maladrax has a small "lab" set up. Pete takes notes as Maladrax mixes a potion. He takes some of his cards and dips them into it.

EXT. CHINATOWN -- DAY

Maladrax wanders through the stores, buying exotic herbs and such. Pete and Benny are in tow, Benny carrying the groceries in brown bags.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Using balloons, Maladrax demonstrates levitation. Benny takes a balloon, rubs it in his hair and sticks it to the wall, then waits to take a bow like it's a big deal.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Maladrax is reading the classifieds real estate section.

INT. KIDS PARTY -- DAY

Pete is doing the dancing handkerchief trick. Suddenly, Benny goes to sneeze, grabs the dancing hanky, sneezes into it, then returns it. Pete doesn't bother to resume the trick.

INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Pete does a trick pulling a coin out of Benny's ear. Maladrax steps up to Benny and raises his arm at the elbow. He takes the coin from Pete, inserts it into Benny's ear, then pulls down on his arm. His eyes go rolling, then stop, his mouth opens and coins pour out.

INT. NIGHT CLUB -- NIGHT

At bar, Benny and Pete waiting to go on. Benny starts coughing and covers mouth. A few coins drop out of his mouth.

INT. REAL ESTATE AGENT OFFICE -- DAY

As the cheesy looking REALTOR in a yellow jacket talks to Pete, Benny and Maladrax, Maladrax takes out a card with an eye on it and places the Realtor under his spell. The Realtor gets up and leads them to:

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

Luxury apartment building. Cheesy Realtor unlocks the doors and shows the trio this fabulous apartment. The Realtor hands the keys to Maladrax while Pete glad-slaps Benny on the back. Some coins come out of Benny's mouth.

INT. NEW KITCHEN -- DAY

In their new kitchen, Maladrax is reading the book of magic and mixing ingredients in a bowl. He hands them to Pete and Benny who then sort them in Tupperware containers.

EXT. STREET -- DAY

Maladrax is showed the town. Pete is still taking notes. They pass a video store with a T.V. on display hooked to a video camera pointed to the street. Maladrax sees himself on the T.V. He is interested.

INT. DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

They are feasting on a banquet with BEAUTIFUL WOMEN. Benny, however, seems apprehensive.

INT. NEW LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Pete is lying on the couch, eating grapes and watching T.V. Benny comes downstairs.

BENNY

So, Pete, shouldn't we be looking for an agent? We have some really good tricks now.

PETE

Tricks? Tricks? Are you nuts? We're wizards now. We don't work. Peasants work. We're with Maladrax of Oslot, wizard supreme.

BENNY

If Maladrax is so supreme, what's he doing hanging around with us?

PETE

We're his equals.

BENNY

He thinks we're his equals.

PETE

As long as he needs someone to show him around the town we are.

BENNY

And when he doesn't?

PETE

You're such a wet blanket. We got the power, man.

BENNY

What happens when the power bill comes in? Maladrax is making me nervous. I get weird vibes from him.

PETE

He's an ancient wizard, of course it's weird.

BENNY

No, no, there's more to it than that. I don't trust him and I don't know why. Why's he teaching us this stuff? Why was he trapped in that place? Where are all these other wizards he keeps talking about from the olden days? It doesn't seem right.

PETE

Well, whatever you do, don't tell him that.

BENNY

So about the act?

PETE

Act? We don't need an act. As soon as Mal gets over his future shock, this town is ours!

Knock at door. Benny gets it. It's a DELIVERY MAN with a ton of video and electronic equipment.

DELIVERY MAN

Got an order here for a Mr. Maladrax.

PETE

Right this way, lad.

BENNY

What's this?

PETE

Mal wants to learn about T.V. I aim to show him.

Pete leans the Delivery Man and his flat truck into the work room.

EXT. LUXURY APARTMENT BUILDING -- NIGHT

Gwen is walking along. She wears a cape this time. Around her neck, she wears a small crystal. It is glowing. It glows brighter as she approaches the apartments. She goes in.

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Gwen approaches Pete and Benny's new apartment. She knocks. Benny answers.

BENNY

Now what did he order?

GWEN

I have come for the cards.

BENNY

You must want the card store. It's two blocks down.

He shuts door.

INT. APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

Gwen knocks again. Benny opens the door again.

GWEN

Please, I must talk to you. Are you Johnson the Astounding?



BENNY

No, I'm Smith, the Astounded. How can I help you?

GWEN

You have stumbled into something evil...

Benny checks the bottom of his shoes.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Which could destroy mankind.

BENNY

I thought you wanted the card store. Look, I'm busy here.

GWEN

It concerns the deck of cards.

BENNY

Cards? What cards? We don't have any cards here. What do I look like, Hallmark? You must be looking for someone else.

GWEN

No, you are the one. This has led me to you.

She holds up the glowing crystal.

BENNY

Nice mood ring.

GWEN

Please, You must turn them over to me before its curse befalls us all.

BENNY

How do you know about the cards? They're not yours, are they?

GWEN

The deck of cards is the property of the Council of Wizards, therefore the property of Zomar, chief wizard. It is he I represent.

BENNY

We got a receipt.

GWEN

There is danger.

BENNY

What danger?

GWEN

Mr. Smith, please listen, those cards  
contains the link to a forbidden  
place, home to the Dark Sorcerer...

She gazes into his eyes.

GWEN (CONT'D)

You've been there. You've seen it,  
haven't you?

BENNY

Oh-oh. What's this Dark Sorcerer  
guy look like?

GWEN

Dark, brooding, foreboding. His  
name is Maladrax.

BENNY

Oh boy.

GWEN

What is wrong?

BENNY

He's out.

GWEN

What? Maladrax? He's out?

BENNY

Yeah. We didn't know.

GWEN

He's out? Where is he?

BENNY

Here. This is his place. He bought  
it for us.

GWEN

No, this cannot be Maladrax. Living  
with you? What has he been doing?

BENNY

Teaching us some tricks. I knew it,  
I knew it. I tried to tell Pete,  
but he wouldn't listen. So, tell  
me, exactly how bad is this guy?

GWEN

He is evil incarnate.

BENNY

That's pretty bad, isn't it?

The noise of the Delivery man startles them.

GWEN

I must go.

BENNY

Wait a second. You can't drop a bombshell like this and leave.

GWEN

I must inform my master.

BENNY

What about us? What are we suppose to do? How do we handle him?

GWEN

Do not cross him.

She hurries away. The Delivery man and Pete reach the front door. When Benny gets distracted for a half a second, Gwen swirls her cape and disappears.

BENNY

Do not cross him? I don't even want to see him now! Hold it! Wait! Who are you? What should we do? Hey! Where'd you go?

Pete shows the man out.

PETE

Who was at the door?

BENNY

Ah, wrong number.

Maladrax comes out. He is anxious to begin.

MALADRAX

Come now, we can begin.

INT. DEN -- DAY

It is a little later. They have a video camera hooked to the T.V. In front of the T.V. is an apple on a stool. Maladrax is mixing a potion in a pot. He dips in one of his cards and faces the camera. He proceeds to cast a small spell. The magic emanates from the card and goes into the camera and comes out the T.V. screen. The apple levitates, spins then splits in two. Then it is restored to whole. Benny is watching this and getting nervous. The apple drops back to the stool. Benny looks relieved. Then the apple explodes on Maladrax's cue. Benny doesn't look well at all.

MALADRAX

Excellent. Then how you explained this television is true. And you say every citizen has one of these televisions?

PETE

Sure, some have more than that.

BENNY

Ex-nay on the oob-bay ube-tay.

MALADRAX

So now, how does one get on this television to get into people's homes?

PETE

That could be tricky.

BENNY

Maybe we could make a really funny home video.

PETE

Benny.

BENNY

Or if you were in a horrible plane crash.

PETE

Benny, what is your problem?

BENNY

Or a wacky weatherman.

PETE

We may have to start small.

BENNY

Yeah, right, small. Local. Local T.V.

PETE

Public access.

BENNY

Public access?

MALADRAX

What is public access?

PETE

It's T.V. that will let just about anyone go on. They have no restrictions or standards.

BENNY

Yeah. We were on it.

PETE

Shut up. We know this guy, Milton. He has this talk show. We did it once. He'd put you on.

BENNY

As what?

PETE

He can go as a magician.

MALADRAX

Make it so.

PETE

You got it, chief.

INT. T.V. STUDIO -- EVENING

Milton is at his set speaking with Pete and Benny.

MILTON

Okay. I hope this other magician is not like you two.

BENNY

Oh, no. He's good.

Pete shoves him.

PETE

He's new in town. So we thought he'd get a kick out of this.

MILTON

Fine, fine.

STAGEHAND comes over.

STAGEHAND

Milt, control says Mary's Flower Show is about finished. You ready to go on?

MILTON

Yeah, let's do it.

It's later now, and the show is in progress.

MILTON (CONT'D)

---Well, we'd like to welcome a new act in town. A hot magician called---  
(checks index card)  
Maladrax the Magnificent.

BENNY(O.S.)

And assistants!

MILTON

And assistants.

Maladrax enters with a flourish, carrying his staff. Benny and Pete follow with props.

Benny has a standing lamp. Pete unscrews the bulb. Maladrax makes it float. Pete bends a coat hanger into a hoop and passes it all around the bulb. Maladrax floats it to Pete's hand. Benny, nervously fingering the light switch, actually turns it on. The bulb Pete is holding lights up. There are some sparks and Pete is startled and drops the bulb to the floor. Pete shoves Benny, Benny shoves back. Maladrax shoots them a look. They stop.

Maladrax takes a newspaper and rolls it into a cone. He signals Benny to approach. Benny shakes his head no. Maladrax makes the request again, slightly more ominously. Pete pushes him forward.

Benny takes the newspaper cone, slipping the bottom into his pants. Maladrax pours in milk, flour, eggs and water while Benny cringes in anticipation of each. Then Maladrax pulls out a mixer and runs it in the cone. Benny is real nervous about this. Then Maladrax pulls the cone out, whips it around and displays a cake. He makes it rise into the air until it's out of sight.

Milt comes over and joins them, applauding.

MILTON (CONT'D)

That was great. You're super. What are you hanging around with these losers for?

MALADRAX

Losers?

PETE

A term of endearment.

MILTON

Well, what are you looking to do?

As Maladrax begins to talk he fingers his pack of cards, pulling out the hypno-eye card.

MALADRAX

I want to be on television. I want the people to see me. I want them to know I'm here and listen to me.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

HUSBAND and WIFE watching the show at home.

HUSBAND  
Hey, this guy's good.

WIFE  
Yeah. I hope he's on again. I like watching him.

INT. T.V. STUDIO -- CONTINUOUS

MILTON  
And I'm sure they will. And remember, folks, you saw him here first...

The card has the desired effect on Milton, who re-thinks the situation.

MILTON (CONT'D)  
Hey, why don't I just give you my show? You'll be great! You can start tomorrow. This time, live. It's fun. You'll love it.

MALADRAX  
Thank you. That will be fine. For now.

Benny looks worried. Pete is impressed. The cake drops on them.

INT. STUDIO CONTROL ROOM -- DAY

The next day. Pete is at director's chair, wearing headset. Also there are the ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, AUDIO GUY, GRAPHICS PERSON.

PETE  
Okay, people, we're just about ready. One minute to air time.  
(into mike)  
Benny, you set?

INT. STUDIO -- CONTINUOUS

All set up for Maladrax's program. Benny is the floor manager, wearing a headset, and looking into the camera.

BENNY  
Pete, we have to talk. This is not a good thing we're doing here...

INT. CONTROL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Pete watches Benny on the monitors.

BENNY

I don't feel good about this!

PETE

What is it with you? Are you afraid of success? Hasn't watching those infomercials taught you anything?

BENNY

I'm just saying this is not a good thing.

PETE

Look at what he's done for us so far, it can only get better.

AUDIO GUY

Excuse me---

PETE

What?

AUDIO GUY

We're on, sir.

PETE

What? Cue the music! Cue the music!

We see one of the monitors which displays the show as broadcast. Benny is staring into the camera. He realizes he's on and ducks out. Some new age music comes on. Graphics up reading "The Mystical Maladrax."

MILTON(O.S.)

Now, for thirty minutes of magic and wonder, it's the Maladrax show. Now, here's Maladrax.

There is a puff of smoke and Maladrax appears on the set.

MALADRAX

Good evening, friends. I am Maladrax of Oslot. And I wish to talk to all of you. Pull up a chair and I will tell you of many things...

He waves his arm and a throne appears. He sits. He has his cards out.

MALADRAX (CONT'D)

I have hopes and desires for you people of the new world. But it is necessary for you now to call a friend and have him turn on his television set and watch. Do it now. I will wait.



He does. He pulls out the hypno-eye card.

INT. CONTROL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

AUDIO GUY  
This is dead air, sir.

PETE  
It's what he wants.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Husband and Wife are watching.

HUSBAND  
Hey, that guy's on again.

WIFE  
Oh, good, I have to call Carol to  
tell here he's on.

HUSBAND  
Yeah, then maybe I'll call Bob.

INT. STUDIO -- LATER

He's wrapping up.

MALADRAX  
Alas, our time is finished for today,  
but we'll continue our talk on the  
morrow. Until then, fare thee well.

PETE(O.S.)  
Fade out...

Maladrax fades away.

INT. CONTROL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

PETE  
I meant the camera, never mind.  
Graphics up. Music up...

As the credits roll, on the monitor we see Benny wandering  
into the shot.

PETE (CONT'D)  
(into mike)  
We're still on the air, Benny...

Benny looks at the camera and ducks off.

PETE (CONT'D)  
Okay, fade to black. Out music and  
we're done.

AUDIO GUY

That was very intense, sir. This guy is good. Can I work on your next show?

PETE

Sure, why not?

Milton comes in followed by Benny.

MILTON

Show looked super! The switch board is lit up! Wait'll tomorrow!

BENNY

Yeah, wait.

EXT. APARTMENT -- DAY

Benny is approaching the building carrying a bag of groceries and health foods. Outside now is a small THRONG OF FANS. They hold signs reading "WE LOVE MALADRAX," "MALADRAX IS THE MAX," and whatnot. They sing:

THRONG

We love you Maladrax, oh yes we do,  
we don't love anyone as much as you.  
When you're not near us, we're blue.  
Oh, Maladrax, we love you!

Benny enters the building. Gwen comes out of the crowd and follows him in.

INT. LOBBY -- DAY

While waiting for the elevator, Benny is looking around. The car arrives and Gwen slips in before Benny realizes. The doors shut.

INT. ELEVATOR -- CONTINUOUS

Gwen taps Benny on the shoulder, startling Benny enough to cause him to fling his groceries.

GWEN

Sorry, it is but I.

BENNY

You again? Well, just who are you anyway?

Gwen takes off her sunglasses and kerchief to reveal her attractiveness for the first time. As they talk, Benny begins gathering his goods, while Gwen has them levitate into his bag.

GWEN

I am Gwendolyn Lanchester, apprentice  
to Zomar, chief wizard.

BENNY

Hey, we're apprentices, too!

GWEN

But you serve the evil one.

BENNY

Yeah, well, you hitch your wagon to  
who you can, you know?

GWEN

Maladrax must be stopped.

BENNY

Fine. Stop him.

GWEN

No, only Zomar can stop him.

BENNY

Well, bring him on over and let me  
know now it turns out.

GWEN

It is not that simple. You must  
help. Come with me, please. You  
must meet with Zomar.

BENNY

So this Zomar can take Maladrax?

GWEN

Yes, it was he who first banished  
Maladrax to the Nether Regions.  
We'll need your help.

The elevator opens and they're still in the lobby.

BENNY

How'd you do that?

GWEN

There isn't much time.

She drags him off.

BENNY

Hey, I'm off to see the wizard.

They're off.

EXT. ZOMAR'S BROWNSTONE -- DAY

Benny and his groceries follow Gwen into the brownstone.

INT. ZOMAR'S CELLAR -- CONTINUOUS

Set up as Zomar's room o'magic, where spells are cast and potions concocted. The door opens and Gwen leads Benny down. Caldrons, suits of armor and other medieval decor abound. Zomar is in the shadows in his wheelchair. Around his neck he wears his crystal amulet.

BENNY

Whoa, look at this. Tubular!

GWEN

It's a cellar.

BENNY

Cellular!

GWEN

This room contains the acquired magical knowledge of Zomar. Knowledge that will help us defeat Maladrax.

(calling out)

Zomar, we are here.

ZOMAR

Come forth and present thyselfes.

BENNY

(aside to Gwen)

Why's he talking like that?

GWEN

It's Old English.

BENNY

He should trade it in for this year's model.

Zomar rolls out of the shadows and we see he is a frail, kindly looking old man.

GWEN

This is Zomar of Bristol, Master Wizard for all ages.

BENNY

How ya doing? So, how's this wizard stuff pay?

GWEN

Quiet, please.

Zomar coughs and wheezes.

BENNY

This is the only guy Maladrax fears?

GWEN

Yes.

BENNY

Oh boy.

ZOMAR

So, you are the one who freed  
Maladrax?

BENNY

It was an accident. You really  
couldn't expect us to know about all  
that stuff.

ZOMAR

You used the wizard cards without  
knowing what you were doing.

BENNY

You can't hold that against us.  
Really. I mean if we waited 'til we  
knew what we were doing all the time,  
we'd never leave our apartment.  
It's not like there was a warning  
label or anything.

ZOMAR

Enough!  
(starts coughing)

BENNY

You okay?

ZOMAR

I am old and obsolete. My sole reason  
for being has been to maintain the  
Wrath of Wizards.

BENNY

(rummages in his bag)  
A little ginseng tea could help.

ZOMAR

What?

Benny pull out a tea bag.

BENNY

Some tea. Break up that cough.  
What kind of meals do you eat?

ZOMAR

Porridge, mostly. Bits of stewed meats.

BENNY

Looks to me you need some fiber. Heavy roughage. Lose the red meat. We may have to carb you up.

GWEN

Carb him up?

BENNY

Carbohydrates. Some pasta.

ZOMAR

What dost thou speakth of?

BENNY

Health food.

ZOMAR

Please, go on.

BENNY

How do you feel about wheat germ?

ZOMAR

Is it contagious?

GWEN

Excuse me, sire, but should we not tell him what Maladrax is up to?

BENNY

Yeah. What was he banished for?

ZOMAR

In the Age of Wizards---

BENNY

Is that before or after the Bronze Age?

GWEN

Quiet.

ZOMAR

A wizard served the monarchs of the old world.

GWEN

Maladrax was tired of having to work for the king. He sought to make himself a ruler.

BENNY

How?

GWEN

He cast a powerful spell over the kingdom to control the people's minds and allegiances. And for a while, it worked.

ZOMAR

But a spell cast over that wide an area drained his powers. Before he could conjure a new spell on the neighboring kingdoms, the rulers called together the Council of Wizards.

GWEN

They summoned Maladrax to appear before him and have him desist. He defied them.

BENNY

And that's when you banished him to the Netherlands?

ZOMAR

The Nether Regions.

BENNY

Yeah, that place. Should I be writing this down?

ZOMAR

And so it was done.

BENNY

So why don't you just call the old gang together and re-banish him?

ZOMAR

Alas, all are gone.

BENNY

Just as well. Reunions can be such a bother.

ZOMAR

I am the sole remaining wizard.

GWEN

So it is up to us to return Maladrax to the Nether Regions.

BENNY

What's this Nether Regions anyway?

GWEN

I guess these days you'd call it another dimension of time and space.

BENNY

A ninth century twilight zone. So you think he's going to try to control the world again?

ZOMAR

Our sole advantage is that it will still take him a long time to cast a spell over the different regions of the modern world.

BENNY

About that... He's kind of licked that problem.

ZOMAR

How so?

BENNY

Television.

GWEN

Oh, of course! It's perfect. He can transmit his magic into everyone's home like any other power impulse.

BENNY

He'll be broadcasting his spells?

ZOMAR

He is a clever devil. So whoever is watching him on T.V. will fall under his spell and do whatever he says.

BENNY

Wow, just like subliminal advertising.

GWEN

Fortunately, it's not like just anyone can get on T.V.

BENNY

Well, yeah, about that too... He's overcome that hurdle as well.

GWEN

What?

BENNY

He's on public access.



GWEN

Simply marvelous. Just how did he  
come upon all this information?

Benny sheepishly raises his hand, then points off.

BENNY

Pete told him.

ZOMAR

Do you realize that you have done  
more in the last few days to aid  
Maladrax's quest than he's managed  
in the previous 900 years!

BENNY

Hey, it's only public access. It's  
a local show, it's not like we got  
him on the Tonight Show or some  
informercial.

INT. APARTMENT DEN -- DAY

Pete, feet on desk, is on the phone.

PETE

Hello, Mr. McClean. I'm Pete Johnson  
and I'm going to make you a very  
wealthy man.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. POWERMITE'S OFFICES -- DAY

Busy lobby of Powermite Productions and Syndication.

INT. MCCLEAN'S OFFICE -- DAY

Chip McClean, young, handsome, nervy T.V. "reporter" is on  
the phone.

CHIP

And just how are you going to do  
that?

PETE

You have a copy of the T.V. ratings  
laying around somewhere? Manhattan?

Chip pulls out some papers.

CHIP

And what am I looking at?

PETE

Look at what the number two show is.

CHIP

Number two in the city? The Maladrax show. What the hell is that? It's a cable show!

PETE

Look again. It's a public access show. This guy's ratings are through the roof. The ratings double every time.

CHIP

That's absurd! What kind of show is it?

PETE

Let's say he's a conjurer. I want to build a whole show around this guy.

CHIP

Conjurer? You mean magician! Why don't we just build a show around a ventriloquist for pete's sake!

PETE

If he had this kind of demographics, you would. This guy cuts across the board. All ages, incomes, education. Men and woman equally. Pets are probably watching. How much better does it get? This is a local phenomenon and you should take it national! I think this'll outdraw your last show where you dug up Giant Stadium to find Jimmy Hoffa.

CHIP

That was a 32 share.

PETE

This'll beat it. I'm letting you in on the ground floor of a great ride.

CHIP

Let's talk.

INT. ZOMAR'S CELLAR -- DAY

Gwen comes downstairs. Benny is sitting alone, waiting.

GWEN

He's resting now.

BENNY

Are you sure he's up to it? He's one wizened wizard.

GWEN

He is over a thousand years old.

BENNY

Yes, but he looks it. How come Maladrax looks so good?

GWEN

The Nether Regions are not subject to our concept of time.

BENNY

We're going to have to pump him up.

GWEN

What?

BENNY

Vitamins, minerals, proteins, mega-vitamins. If he's gonna face Maladrax, he's got to get in shape.

GWEN

Can you pump him up?

BENNY

We can try. I'll bring over my holistic cook book. That'll get us started.

GWEN

We must make a plan. You must return to Maladrax.

BENNY

This is a plan? Actually, I had considered fleeing right about now.

GWEN

No. He will become suspicious if you leave now. And it better suits us that you remain with him.

BENNY

You sure? 'Cause that fleeing concept is really looking good.

GWEN

Please, you must help us. We can not do this alone. We need you.

BENNY

Well, if that's how it must be, then Pete and me will stay on Maladrax like brown on rice.

GWEN

You mean like white on rice.

BENNY

No, I'm talking about brown rice.  
It's healthier, you know. So, what  
are these cards all about?

GWEN

The wizard cards. Those are cards  
which hold the power to cast many of  
a wizard's most common spells.

BENNY

Oh, magic flash cards.

GWEN

More like a microchip. One pack of  
cards was lost centuries ago and  
Zomar has been searching for them  
since, afraid that they might release  
Maladrax.

BENNY

I said I was sorry.

GWEN

Zomar will need the original 13 cards  
used to re-banish Maladrax.

BENNY

So you need our deck.

GWEN

Yes.

Benny looks at watch. He gets his packages.

BENNY

I'd better get going.

GWEN

Wait. Take this.

She takes out her tracing crystal.

BENNY

What's that?

GWEN

My mood ring. I'll be able to keep  
an eye on you with it.

BENNY

Oh. Thanks. I feel better now.

EXT. POWERMITE HEADQUARTERS -- DAY

A limo pulls up. Out gets Maladrax, Pete and Benny.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY

Maladrax, Pete and Benny are taking a meeting with Chip, his boss, the stogy MR. POWERS and his COMPANY HACKS.

CHIP

So, there you have it, Mal here is hot. A phenomenon waiting to happen. I want a special up. We're thinking live, okay? Look at these demographics. His cable show tests off the graph. He's got this town sewn up. And he'll play in Peoria and all the rest of the fly-over. The special will show it. Then we're talking series, maybe even a crack at the networks.

Benny whispers to Pete.

BENNY

Wow. And he isn't even under the spell.

POWERS

So what format are we looking at? Talk? Variety? Tram-emyd?

BENNY

Game show!

PETE

Will you be quiet?

COMPANY HACK 2

Format can be a problem.

BENNY

Yes, well, we've been throwing this against the wall and looking at the numbers and doing meetings and taking people and lunch-izing over this, concept-wise---

POWERS

Who are you?

MALADRAX

My aid.

BENNY

But I expect a producer credit.

PETE

My associate and I feel that less is more. A reality based show, with Maladrax being Maladrax and weaving his spell over the viewers. Toss in some other magicians and a guest star or two. That's it. Now Benny and myself are in fact---

CHIP

This show, with its blend of magic and new-age crap will easily outperform that special where we said we'd found Hitler's diary.

COMPANY HACK 2

That wasn't my fault. How could I have known it was filled with bad poetry?

COMPANY HACK 1

Where do we do this from? Here? On location?

CHIP

We've got a mystical persona here. We need a location that will emphasize this magical quality.

POWERS

So, then, what is the most magical place on earth?

BENNY

Disneyland!

PETE

Hush!

CHIP

Research punched up some numbers and came up with this list.

He hands out list.

COMPANY HACK 2

Stonehenge?

MALADRAX

Stonehenge? It still stands?

COMPANY HACK 2

Produce in England? That'll drive up production on an unknown quantity.

CHIP

True, but I'm thinking about the European market now. Maladrax has an old world feel to him.

BENNY

That's 'cause he's old.

CHIP

With the right promotion, we can beam this sucker all across the continent.

BENNY

Oh, great.

As the executives ponder, Maladrax slowly extracts his cards. But they suddenly seem to reach a consensus before he can use it.

POWERS

Let's do 'er!

Chip is pleased, as is Maladrax, who is also surprised. They shake hands. Pete is beaming but Benny doesn't look as excited. They all get up and glad hand one another, leading Maladrax out of the room. Before Pete and Benny can reach the door, it's shut on them. They walk into it. Stunned, they stand there. Benny goes to shake Pete's hand, he slaps it away.

INT. ZOMAR'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Zomar is on an exercise bike. Benny is cheering him on, holding an electric fan in front of him.

INT. MCCLEAN'S OFFICE -- DAY

Chip is working the phones. Sketches of Stonehenge are on the wall.

INT. CELLAR -- DAY

Gwen is stirring something in the cauldron with a large wooden pole. Benny produces an egg beater and goes to it.

INT. ZOMAR'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Zomar works out with an Abmaster.

INT. BARBER SHOP -- DAY

Maladrax is very uncomfortable as a BARBER goes to work neatening him up. Pete is reading an old magazine.

INT. CELLAR -- DAY

Zomar levitates a thick book, then a dumb bell, then a set of weights while Benny looks on. Benny slaps Zomar on the back in a "atta boy" manner. This breaks the spell, the items drop, one of them on Zomar's foot.

INT. MALADRAX'S DEN -- DAY

Pete's deck of cards is on the desk. The video camera is still set up from the original experiments. Benny walks by the door, carrying a suitcase. He then backs up and decides to enter. He approaches the cards. Then he hears footsteps. He ducks behind the desk, not realizing he's activated the camera. Pete comes sneaking in carrying in a duffel bag. He approaches the cards. Benny pops up.

BENNY

Hello.

PETE

(startled)

What are you doing here?

BENNY

I'm finding out what you're doing here.

PETE

Oh, well, I'm not doing anything.

BENNY

So now I know that.

PETE

So I guess we should get packing for the big trip.

BENNY

Big trip to England. For the big show.

PETE

Big show this weekend. Big show.

BENNY

Big deal.

PETE

You know, being front man for Maladrax is okay, but why shouldn't I get to use this magic, too?

BENNY

Because you don't know what you're doing?



PETE

Besides that. After all, I bought  
the cards. They are mine.

BENNY

I paid for them.

PETE

Ah, but I told you to...

He pulls out a card.

PETE (CONT'D)

How tricky can it be? Lacertosa.

He points it at Benny and Benny disappears.

EXT. FRONT DOOR -- DAY

Benny appears on the stoop of a large, elegant door. He  
looks around.

BENNY

Hey, Pete, where'd you go? Pete?  
Aww, he did it again...

He looks around. He tries the door. It's locked. He knocks.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Alle-alle, all's free!

INT. MALADRAX'S DEN -- CONTINUOUS

Pete is stunned.

PETE

Hey, Benny, where'cha go? Come back.  
Lacertosa. Unhocus-pocus.

He starts flicking the card.

EXT. FRONT DOOR -- DAY

Benny stops knocking and goes to lean against the door frame,  
when suddenly he's...

EXT. PARK -- DAY

...Falling over a park bench. He springs back up.

BENNY

Where'd that come from?...

He spins around to realize he's in a new place.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Pete, what are you doing to me?

Benny goes to sit down on the bench, when suddenly...

EXT. BUSY STREET -- DAY

...Benny plops down in the middle of a busy street. Suddenly realizing his mistake, he gets up and moves out of the way of an oncoming car, when suddenly...

EXT. CLIFF -- DAY

...Benny's step takes him to the very edge of a rocky precipice. He catches himself and his balance and peers out over the cliff.

BENNY

Yodel-la-he-who! Pete, help!

When suddenly...

EXT. JUNGLE -- DAY

...Benny is now peering into the gaping jaws of a lion.

INT. MALADRAX'S DEN -- CONTINUOUS

Pete is frantically waving the card around.

PETE

Shazam! Abra-cadabra! Ala-cazam!  
Presto-chango! A la peanut butter  
sandwich! Ish Kabibble! You'd better  
start working or I'm going to attach  
you to the spokes of a bike!

EXT. JUNGLE -- DAY

Benny darts away from the lion, when suddenly...

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS -- DAY

...Benny steps onto the tracks, into the path of an oncoming train. Petrified, he covers his eyes and yells, when suddenly...

EXT. BEACH -- DAY

...The oncoming train becomes an incoming wave and douses Benny, knocking him down. He starts to swim, when suddenly...

EXT. TUNDRA -- DAY

He's in a snow bank, making snow angels. Realizing he's moved again, he gets up, and goes to lean against a nearby tree, when suddenly...

EXT. PARK -- DAY

...Benny tumbles over the same park bench again.

INT. MALADRAX'S DEN -- CONTINUOUS

Pete is still frantically waving the card around.

PETE

Ib-biddy bob-biddy boop! Lacertosa,  
already!

Suddenly, Benny appears. He instantly grabs the card away from Pete.

BENNY

Cut it out! Pete, we have to talk.

PETE

What?

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Maladrax enters the apartment. He sits and notices the remote control laying nearby. He flicks on the T.V.

INT. MALADRAX'S DEN -- CONTINUOUS

BENNY

I've been seeing this woman---

PETE

Good for you.

BENNY

No, no. She was strange.

PETE

Well, you really can't expect too  
much your first time out.

BENNY

Pete, she knows about the cards.

PETE

How'd she know that?

BENNY

She's a wizard's apprentice. She  
works for a wizard. The cards are  
theirs. She said Maladrax is an  
escaped prisoner. And we let him  
out.

PETE

Whoa, wait a sec---

BENNY

He's called the Dark Sorcerer. He was imprisoned by a council of wizards. He's evil incarnate. He's going to take over the world.

PETE

What lady? Where is she?

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Maladrax is playing with the remote. He flips through a few channels. Then Pete and Benny appear on the T.V.

BENNY

He's an evil wizard and he's living with us!

PETE

Calm down. Are you sure?

BENNY

He's dangerous. Can you imagine what he's going to do to us when he finds out we're not really wizards?

PETE

You know, just because a guy wants to take over the world doesn't mean he has to be evil incarnate.

BENNY

Pete, look at the man. Does he look like a good guy? Don't you see what you've done?

PETE

Me?

BENNY

You let him loose!

PETE

It's so easy to assign blame.

Maladrax arches an eyebrow.

MALADRAX

(calling)

Peter, Benjamin, please come here.

They enter.

PETE

Yes?

Maladrax throws out his arms and suddenly Pete and Benny are hoisted up into the air.

MALADRAX

So, you are aware of Maladrax!

BENNY

Who?

PETE

I don't know what you're talking about!

Maladrax raises his arms and Pete and Benny are bumped up into the ceiling.

BENNY

Oh, about you being evil incarnate?

He bumps them again.

MALADRAX

Who told you this?

PETE

Nobody.

BENNY

You know how you just hear things---

Maladrax shoots a pain beam at Pete.

MALADRAX

Now then, how did you find out?

BENNY

Stop it, I told him!

Maladrax stops the beam at Pete and turns his attention to Benny.

MALADRAX

And who told you about me?

INT. ZOMAR'S CELLAR -- CONTINUOUS

The crystal ball is glowing. Gwen notices it first. Zomar is studying some texts.

GWEN

Zomar, look! Ben is in trouble.

They go to the crystal. It shows Maladrax with Benny and Pete suspended and in trouble.

PETE

What are you going to do to him?

MALADRAX

I suppose I could turn him into a plain newt.

BENNY

Oh, not that, anything but that! I couldn't stand it! Appearing in Las Vegas, growing a cheesy moustache, singing "Danke Sehr" all the time, having my head slightly too small for my body---

PETE

What are you talking about?

BENNY

Didn't you hear him? He's going to turn me into Wayne Newton!

PETE

No, you idiot, he's going to turn you into a plain newt. Newt. A small, slimy lizard.

BENNY

Oh. Okay.

GWEN

Can we help them?

ZOMAR

It is time.

GWEN

What is time?

Zomar retrieves his deck of cards. He shuffles them, and extracts a transport card.

ZOMAR

Petrozza!

A breeze blows up, some lights flash. Gwen and Zomar vanish.

INT. MALADRAX'S LIVING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Maladrax bumps them up.

PETE

Hey, look, Maladrax, you wanna take over the world, fine. But anybody messes with my pal, they gotta answer to me.

BENNY

Thanks, Pete.

They get bumped.

MALADRAX

Then you'll be a newt also.

BENNY

Fat lot of help you are.

Maladrax is gearing up for some nasty spell when a breeze blows up, there's some flashing lights and Zomar and Gwen appear in the living room.

ZOMAR

Maladrax!

Maladrax turns to see Zomar. Gwen is trying to stop him, but he shakes her off.

MALADRAX

Zounds! Zomar, alive?

BENNY

You two know each other? Small world.

MALADRAX

You knew he was here?

BENNY

I didn't catch the name.

As Maladrax turns his attention to Zomar, Pete and Benny drop to the floor.

GWEN

Zomar, this is not the time. You are not ready. Please, no.

ZOMAR

So, Maladrax, we are yet to be truly rid of you.

(cough)

It is good and well that I remained here to await your return.

MALADRAX

You old fool! Did you remain earthbound simply to match talents with me yet again?

ZOMAR

Indeed I did.

MALADRAX

How you've wasted away, Wizard. Neglecting your powers, while I have honed and sharpened my skills. You are no match for me, Zomar.

PETE

What is going on here?

BENNY

Pete, Zomar, chief wizard, Zomar,  
Pete.

ZOMAR

By luck or misdeed, you have escaped  
your fate. I am to return you to  
the Nether Regions.

Zomar pulls out the 13 Nether Region cards.

MALADRAX

You are no match for me, old man.

He throws a bolt at Zomar. Zomar blocks it with the cards,  
but they are split in two and scattered, staggering Zomar in  
the process. Pete and Benny crawl behind a couch. Maladrax  
commands a flock of knives to rise out of the dinnerware  
hutch and fly at Zomar and Gwen. Gwen sees.

GWEN

Zomar!

Zomar turns. He shoves Gwen to the side. She stumbles over  
the couch, landing on Pete and Benny. Zomar waves his arm,  
but nothing happens. He pulls out a card and the knives  
turn into flowers, bouncing harmlessly off him. He turns  
and throws a fireball at Maladrax. Maladrax brings a fire  
extinguisher to life and douses it. He zaps Zomar with a  
bolt.

BENNY

Pete, Gwen, Gwen, Pete.

PETE

Hi, how ya doing?

GWEN

I've been better.

BENNY

(to Pete)

This is the only man who can save  
us.

(to Gwen)

Should he be doing this right now?

GWEN

Well, he is stronger then he's been  
in a long time, thanks to your health  
foods.



BENNY

(to Pete)

See?

Pete rolls his eyes. They peek out.

PETE

Excuse me, but the only man who can save us is getting his butt kicked.

BENNY

We have to do something.

GWEN

We have to get those cards. He needs them to get Maladrax.

PETE

Okay, okay, we'll distract him while you get the cards.

Pete sees their nearby novelty box, and signals Benny to pull out a squirting flower gag. He does.

BENNY

Yo, Maladrax!

He turns and Benny squirts him in the face. This gives Zomar a chance to recover and zap Maladrax back. Benny, Pete and Gwen duck. They scurry off.

MALADRAX

Just like old times, eh? Only instead of Merlin, you have me.

ZOMAR

You are no Merlin.

MALADRAX

True, but then this isn't Camelot.

As they move about, Gwen is able to crawl around and gather up the Nether Region card halves. From the kitchen Pete and Benny fling plates at Maladrax, who simply zaps them skeet shooting style.

Maladrax turns toward Benny and Pete, conjures up a fireball and throws it at them. Pete grabs the water spray from the sink. As the ball comes at them, Pete sprays it. The fireball is doused. Maladrax spies the fireplace tools. He launches them at Zomar. Zomar commands a table to shield him and absorb the points.

Zomar then flings the table at Maladrax, who blasts it out of the air. As Maladrax readies his answering volley, he's struck from behind by a sortie of spring snakes, fired by Pete and Benny from gag cans.

Maladrax blasts the cans out of their hands. Zomar zaps Maladrax. Their battle resumes.

Shots are exchanged, but Zomar's are becoming weaker. Finally, Maladrax hits him with a mighty bolt, sending him, mortally wounded, to the floor. Gwen sees and crawls over to him.

GWEN

Zomar!

Maladrax now turns his attention to Pete and Benny.

MALADRAX

So, you plot against me. Your treachery shall be punished!

PETE

Wait a second, chief, let's not be hasty here. Remember who let you loose.

BENNY

(pointing to Pete)

Yeah, it was him. Wait a second, it was me.

PETE

And me!

BENNY

Okay, him too.

Maladrax goes to turn on Pete and Benny, a whirlwind begins blowing in the room. Pete and Benny begin backing off, heading for the door. Maladrax is poised to zap them, suddenly, they disappear. Maladrax turns and sees that it was the very weak Zomar holding up a card. Then he and Gwen disappear.

MALADRAX

A pox upon your miserable soul! But you are too late, Zomar! Tomorrow, at this time, I shall rule!

INT. ZOMAR'S CELLAR -- NIGHT

Pete and Benny appear, followed by Gwen and Zomar. Zomar is mortally wounded.

GWEN

Oh, Zomar, please, you mustn't---

ZOMAR

This is my end, my fair Gwendolyn. My time has passed. The age of wizards thus endth.

GWEN

How can you say that, Zomar, when Maladrax remains.

ZOMAR

Then it is up to you to vanquish him.

He takes his pouch of cards and hands it to Gwen.

GWEN

But, Maladrax---you can't---

He expires.

BENNY

Gwen, are you okay?

GWEN

I am all right.

BENNY

Zomar?

GWEN

He is no more.

PETE

I'm so sorry, Gwen. What can I say?

BENNY

He saved our lives.

GWEN

He was my life.

Gwen goes to a trunk and pulls out a magic shroud. She covers the wizard. The body dissolves again, the shroud comes to rest on the floor.

PETE

What about Maladrax?

BENNY

The show's on tomorrow night.

GWEN

All is lost. Without the cards---

BENNY

You've got the cards.

Gwen checks her pockets and pulls out the card halves.

GWEN

They are no good like this.

BENNY

Too bad you can't tape them together.

PETE

Why can't you?

GWEN

Well, because...I don't know, can we?

They see a roll of Scotch tape on the table and all dash for it.

The candles have burned down, for it's later. They have matched off the pieces for 12 cards, and Gwen is in the process of carefully taping two halves together. When she seems satisfied, she holds it up.

GWEN (CONT'D)

There, that seems to do it. I should test it.

PETE

Test it on me.

BENNY

'Cuse me?

PETE

Have you ever known me to refuse a lady in distress?

BENNY

What's her clothes gotta do with it? She should test it on me. I've been there, I'll know if it's right or not.

PETE

That's just it, you've done your part, I should go next.

BENNY

You've done plenty.

Gwen raises the card.

GWEN

Kashecky...

Benny and Pete disappear. She silently counts off to three, then:

GWEN (CONT'D)

Kashecky...

Pete and Benny appear, clutching each other in terror, screaming.

GWEN (CONT'D)  
So, did it work?...

They nod furiously. Gwen is pleased. She holds up the tape.

GWEN (CONT'D)  
Well, let's get going then.

Pete and Benny separate, then get to work.

INT. ENGLISH AIRPORT -- DAY

Maladrax and Chip disembark a Concorde and head for a waiting limousine.

INT. ZOMAR'S CELLAR -- AFTERNOON

Gwen is slowly and carefully lining up another card. Pete is carefully taping down a card. Benny has tangled balls of tape all over himself.

EXT. ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE -- NIGHT

In the distance we see Stonehenge and the T.V. set-up for the remote show: lights, pedestal cameras, boom mikes, camera crane. Nearby is the control truck with a satellite dish atop it, ready to transmit the program to the satellite in orbit. Other equipment trucks are parked, along with trailers and R.V.s.

EXT. STONEHENGE -- NIGHT

Chip and Maladrax and the crew are in conference. Maladrax has his cauldron set up with shelves of ingredients behind. Chip is on a head set managing the set. Equipment is being placed. A band shell is set up behind Stonehenge. Monitors are set up all around the inside of Stonehenge, which is where Maladrax will be speaking from.

INT. ZOMAR'S CELLAR -- EVENING

It's the next evening and they are still working on the cards. Gwen leans over to help Pete. Three cards are still undone.

GWEN  
No, the cards have to be lined up exactly.

BENNY  
I can't see straight any more.

PETE  
What time is it?

BENNY

It's almost seven. The show starts  
in an hour.

GWEN

I won't be able to get it done that  
quick! We need more time.

PETE

We haven't got it.

GWEN

Maladrax can not be allowed to  
broadcast. You must stall him. You  
have to stop the show until I can  
finish. This show, it's, it's a  
huge, highly technical and intricately  
planned operation, can you disrupt  
it?

BENNY

Hey, that's what we do best!

PETE

All right, we'll do it. We'll need  
some stuff back at our apartment...

Pete grabs a magic wand from the desk.

PETE (CONT'D)

This could come in handy---

EXT. STONEHENGE -- DUSK

The orchestra is in place, tuning up. Maladrax is at center  
stage with Chip.

EXT. BANDSHELL -- DUSK

Pete and Benny, in their magician tuxedos, appear like magic  
near where the musicians are.

PETE

You okay?

BENNY

Yeah, but I think I'm suffering from  
broom-lag.

PETE

This must be the place.

BENNY

Okay, we're here. Have you come up  
with a plan yet?

PETE

Me? I thought you said you were going to come up with one...

Benny starts wiggling. Then he pulls a bunny out of the suit.

PETE (CONT'D)

Careful with that, it's my spare hare.

EXT. STONEHENGE -- NIGHT

Chip and Maladrax confer about the program.

CHIP

The credits will come up and we'll be starting with a piano solo before the whole orchestra joins in to back you up. Then I'll introduce you, you do your shtick and---

MALADRAX

I'll be preparing my---recipe.

CHIP

Fine. Man, I wish you would have let me book the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders for this gig.

MALADRAX

It would be inappropriate. I prefer having the people focused on the message.

CHIP

Don't forget the guest stars. We'll cue you when the remote units are ready. David Cooperfield is in Colorado. Imagine, trying to make the Grand Canyon disappear. Then we got Uri Geller bending spoons in Moscow---

In the back we see Pete and Benny sneaking around.

BENNY

(whispering)

Wow, Uri Geller. That's so cool. But I wouldn't want to eat soup with that guy---

Pete hushes him, then grabs a jar labeled "hen's teeth." They dump it and substitute pop corn.

PETE

As much fun to make---

BENNY

As it is to eat.

A bottle of bat blood is replaced with Mr. Bubble liquid bubble bath. Then they put vinegar and baking soda in two other containers.

INT. ZOMAR'S CELLAR -- CONTINUOUS

Gwen has finished another card.

EXT. STONEHENGE -- NIGHT

The stage lights come on, they are broadcast-ready. Benny and Pete enter the musician's trailer.

INT. MUSICIAN'S TRAILER -- DUSK

They come to the stacks of sheet music. Benny pulls out a fountain pen and sprays it over the sheet music, creating extra dots.

INT. PIANIST'S TRAILER -- NIGHT

The Pianist, ENVY, is waiting to go on. STAN THE STAGE MANAGER is about to signal him on.

ENVY

Where's my page turner?

STAN

I'll get him. You go on.

Stan goes to the next door and knocks.

STAN (CONT'D)

You're on, Ted.

PETE

Coming.

Benny exits dressing room. In the room we see the page turner, TED, tied up and gagged. Pete is beside him.

INT. CONTROL ROOM TRUCK -- NIGHT

The DIRECTOR and HIS CREW are in place for the show.

DIRECTOR

Okay, people, let's get this puppy on its feet. Cue the orchestra, cue the announcer. Take it one. Roll tape.



EXT. STONEHENGE -- NIGHT

Chip cues Maladrax, who begins mixing his potion. Seeing the show as it is broadcast, graphics come up over Maladrax as he mixes in the popcorn.

ANNOUNCER(O.S.)

Live from Stonehenge, it's Night Magic! A chance to explore and experience the most ancient of arts-- magic! Featuring live performances by David Cooperfield in Arizona, Uri Geller in Moscow and the Amazing Randy in Butte, Montana and much more! And now, our guide on this magical mystical tour, Chip McClean. And now, the London Symphony Orchestra.

EXT. BANDSHELL -- NIGHT

Envy takes his place. Benny comes out and sits beside him. Envy starts to play. Then Benny turns the page, only then returning it. Envy begins to play the same passage over. Benny fakes turning the page again, Envy re-plays the same passage.

INT. CONTROL ROOM TRUCK -- NIGHT

The Director is watching.

EXT. BANDSHELL -- NIGHT

Envy is playing the same passage yet again. Now he realizes it and turns the page himself. Benny quickly turns it back. Envy re-plays the passage again, then comes to a halt.

ENVY

Assassin!

He chases Benny off stage.

INT. CONTROL ROOM TRUCK -- NIGHT

DIRECTOR

(into mike)

What is going on?

CHIP

I'm not sure. The piano-guy seems to be trying to kill his assistant.

They all flip through the script.

EXT. BACKSTAGE -- NIGHT

Stan the Stage Manager sees Benny and Envy run by.

STAN  
Where's the conductor? Where's the  
conductor?

PETE  
Coming.

EXT. BAND SHELL -- NIGHT

Pete comes out, dressed as a train conductor.

PETE  
Tickets, please, tickets.

He works the first row of musicians. He goes to the podium,  
only to be met by the REAL CONDUCTOR.

REAL CONDUCTOR  
Who are you?

PETE  
I'm the conductor! Who are you?

REAL CONDUCTOR  
I'm the conductor.

PETE  
No, you're not.

REAL CONDUCTOR  
Yes, I am.

PETE  
Oh yeah? Then what's the next stop?

Benny runs up, carrying a light bulb.

BENNY  
Hey, you the conductor?

CONDUCTOR  
Yes!

BENNY  
Hold this.

Conductor holds bulb and it lights up.

PETE  
I guess you are the conductor.

BENNY  
I love electric humor.

They run off. Conductor tosses down bulb, taps his baton  
and brings the full orchestra to attention. They begin  
playing a symphony.

EXT. BACKSTAGE -- NIGHT

Benny and Pete are sneaking around.

EXT. STONEHENGE -- NIGHT

Maladrax has halted his potion. Chip is looking on, befuddled.

EXT. BANDSHELL -- NIGHT

Conductor turns his sheet music and hits the pages covered with dots. Suddenly, the orchestra comes musically apart as everyone plays something else. Conductor begins tapping his baton. Benny comes running out with a bucket of white-out. He directs the Conductor to the side and paints over the page. The Conductor returns to see the entire page is now white.

He flips ahead a page and raises his arms to begin. Pete and Benny are now standing behind him. They put out their arms also. From the front the Real Conductor should look like a beetle or some bug thing.

The Conductor begins and Benny and Pete follow, waving in different tempos generally screwing up the orchestra. Conductor realizes what's going on and chases them off.

INT. CONTROL BOOTH TRUCK -- NIGHT

Everyone is flipping through their scripts. Maladrax can be heard on a speaker.

MALADRAX

What delays us now?

DIRECTOR

Appears to be multiple conductors.

EXT. BANDSHELL -- NIGHT

Orchestra regroups and begins playing the Lone Ranger Overture. Suddenly, Benny comes leaping out.

BENNY

Hi-ho, Silver, away!

He jumps on a bass fiddle and rides it around like a hobby horse. Pete comes out, grabs a violin and uses it like a bow and arrow, only shooting the bows like arrows. STAGE HANDS chase them off.

EXT. BANDSHELL -- NIGHT

Benny and Pete climb up the side of the band shell as Guards surround them. Pete leaps off, Benny follows.

PETE

Geronimo!

BENNY

Pocahontas!

They bounce off some tiffany drums and land on a xylophone and ride it offstage like a scooter.

EXT. STONEHENGE -- NIGHT

MALADRAX

What is going on down there?

CHIP

Live television, sheesh.

EXT. BANDSHELL -- NIGHT

Under the stage, Benny and Pete sneak up. The Conductor is trying to calm down. He puts his baton down, and starts pulling out his hair. Benny pulls the magic wand out of his jacket. He reaches up and replaces the baton with it.

The orchestra begins playing again. As the conductor points to the different sections of the orchestra with his baton/wand, things happen: A Cello Player is now holding a rubber chicken and frying pan. Birds comes out of the French horns, bubbles from the flutes. The cymbals turn into pillows, oboes into fish, etc.

INT. CONTROL ROOM TRUCK -- NIGHT

DIRECTOR

Cue Chip now! Chip, on air, now!

Chip on screen with hand-held mike and clipboard, he is addressing the audience.

CHIP

Good evening world, I'm Chip McClean and tonight we are here at the most ancient of monuments to look at the world of the supernatural. From magic to mystics, we've always been enchanted, if not obsessed, with the world of magic. From sorcerers to psychics, we look to another realm of power that can effect our lives---

INT. ZOMAR'S CELLAR -- CONTINUOUS

Gwen comes to the last card and now realizes that it is damaged and can't be repaired. She begins banging her head on the table.

EXT. STONEHENGE -- NIGHT

Benny and Pete are hiding behind some trucks. Suddenly Gwen appears next to them, holding the transport card.

BENNY

All right! Gwen's here!

PETE

Great. Take care of it, will ya?

GWEN

There's a problem.

BENNY

Does it involve not taking care of him?

GWEN

Yes.

BENNY

Figures.

PETE

What is it?

GWEN

The 13th card was too damaged to repair. I'm short a card.

PETE

She's short a card.

BENNY

You mean you're not playing with a full deck?

PETE

So that's it then, huh? It's over.

GWEN

Well, I happen to know where there is another card.

BENNY

Oh, man, you had us worried there for a minute. Where can you get the other card?...

Gwen looks off to Maladrax. Pete follows her gaze. Then Benny catches on. He looks crestfallen, then resigned.

BENNY (CONT'D)

I mean, him ruling the world, would that be really a bad thing?

PETE

Come on, Benny, we're on.

BENNY

When did you get so brave?

He starts off, dragging Benny with him.

EXT. STONEHENGE CENTER STAGE -- NIGHT

Chip is still talking as Maladrax (no longer patiently) stands by.

CHIP

---We'll be starting by meeting a  
rave of this new age phenomenon, the  
self-proclaimed wizard, Maladrax,  
who promises something very special  
for us this evening---

INT. CONTROL BOOTH TRUCK -- NIGHT

Director and crew are flipping through their scripts again, shaking their heads.

EXT. STONEHENGE CENTER STAGE -- NIGHT

Pete and Benny, now wearing false beards, make an entrance. Benny carries a small prop table with an envelope, shoe box, plastic garbage bag and shovel.

PETE

Thank you, thank you, for that  
wonderful introduction. Now then, I  
will need your assistance for a little  
card trick. First I'll need a deck  
of cards. Ah, there we are...

He manages to snag Maladrax's deck of wizard cards. Maladrax restrains himself. Pete fans out the cards.

PETE (CONT'D)

Here, sir, pick a card, any card...

Maladrax picks a card. It is the banishment card.

PETE (CONT'D)

No, no, no, don't let me see it.  
Now, without looking at it, seal the  
card in the envelope...

Benny hands him the envelope with a flourish. Maladrax puts the card in and seals it.

PETE (CONT'D)

Okay, now, sir, take that envelope, which you yourself sealed without any assistance from me, take that envelope and place it in the shoe box...

Benny hands him the shoe box. Maladrax puts the envelope in the box.

PETE (CONT'D)

Very good. Now, with the string, tie the box closed, good and tight...

It is done.

PETE (CONT'D)

Good, good. Now, without looking at the box, put it in the plastic garbage bag and tie it shut with the handy twist-tie. Okay. Don't look at it. Now, hand the bag to my assistant and he will take it and bury it in a hole.

Benny takes the bag and the shovel and walks off stage.

EXT. OFF STAGE -- NIGHT

Benny meets Gwen and hands her the bag.

GWEN

You got it?...

Benny nods.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Marvelous! Now, you stall him while I take this card back and incorporate it into the deck.

She takes out her transport card and vanishes.

BENNY

Stall? Stall? Wait a second! We just got finished stalling!

EXT. STONEHENGE CENTER STAGE -- NIGHT

Pete, Maladrax and Chip are finishing up.

PETE

Now, sir, your card was---the three of hearts!

MALADRAX

How in blazes should I know what  
card it was???

PETE

Thank you!

Pete hustles off. Chip and Maladrax try to resume some sense  
of normalcy.

CHIP

Yes, magic, unpredictable and  
mysterious. Now then, we are about  
to meet a giant in the realm of magic,  
a master in the magical arts---

INT. CONTROL ROOM TRUCK -- NIGHT

As the crew watches Chip prattle on, they all find their  
spot in the script. There is a knock at the door.

DIRECTOR

Who is it?

Pete and Benny, now in regular clothes, enter. They flash  
their library cards.

PETE

Mulligan and O'Donell from the union.  
Sorry boys, we're on strike.

DIRECTOR

What?

BENNY

Negotiations fell through. Management  
sucks. Up the workers.

Pete elbows him to keep him from getting carried away.

DIRECTOR

What negotiations?

PETE

The secret negotiations.

DIRECTOR

I didn't hear anything about any  
secret negotiations.

BENNY

Of course not, it was a secret.

PETE

Now, roll out, or you can kiss your  
membership cards good-bye.



DIRECTOR

But the show---

PETE

Buckling under to management, chief?

DIRECTOR

No, no. Come on, boys.

The crew files out, with Pete and Benny marching in place behind. When the last crew member leaves, they shut and lock the door. They jump into the seats.

PETE

Hey, it's just like public access,  
only bigger and more complicated!

Dissolve to a 3/4 shot of Maladrax, as he looks up and addresses the camera.

EXT. STONEHENGE CENTER STAGE -- CONTINUOUS

MALADRAX

Greetings, world. I am Maladrax of  
Oslot. I have come here tonight for  
a very special purpose.

As he's ready to bring out his card, the popcorn begins popping wildly, breaking his concentration.

CHIP

What is that? What is that?

INT. CONTROL ROOM TRUCK -- NIGHT

BENNY

Pop goes the weasel!

INT. ZOMAR'S CELLAR -- CONTINUOUS

Gwen is now incorporating the 13 cards into a unit.

EXT. STONEHENGE -- NIGHT

The popcorn has simmered down. Maladrax is slightly confused.

CHIP

We apologize for that little mishap,  
but as I remind you, we are LIVE!  
And that anything can happen,  
especially in the realm of the unknown  
and yet-to-be discovered. Maladrax,  
please continue.

Chip is waving him on, to continue. Maladrax grabs the next flask and pours it in. Again, he turns to the camera.

The 3/4 T.V. view of Maladrax as he speaks.

MALADRAX

Again, I say I come here for a special reason. I have a gift, a power, that I now wish to share with you...

As he brings the card up, bubbles begin drifting into the scene, again breaking the mood.

MALADRAX (CONT'D)

What is this!

INT. CONTROL ROOM TRUCK -- NIGHT

Benny cues up a Lawrence Welk bubble tune.

INT. POWERMITE EXECUTIVE SUITE -- NIGHT

Chip's bosses are watching the show on their big screen T.V.

POWERS

What is this?

EXT. STONEHENGE -- NIGHT

Maladrax goes back, grabs the vinegar and baking soda, pours it in the caldron, and it begins bubbling and foaming out.

INT. CONTROL ROOM TRUCK -- NIGHT

Pete is playing around with the video switcher.

BENNY

I did that as a science fair project one year.

PETE

Oh, yeah, the volcano. You really need the red food coloring, though. To get the total effect.

BENNY

True.

PETE

Hey, here's an interesting effect.

On the monitor, we see Maladrax trying to compose himself and add the last few ingredients. He faces the camera again. As he speaks a video blot controlled by Pete is brought up over Maladrax's face.

MALADRAX

I want you to know there is someone who can solve the problems of this  
(MORE)

MALADRAX (CONT'D)

world. Someone with the power to re-  
create the world. I am sincere, you  
need only to look into my eyes to  
see that.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

People watching don't know what to make of it.

INT. BAR -- CONTINUOUS

PATRONS are laughing.

EXT. STONEHENGE -- CONTINUOUS

Chip is watching Maladrax, nodding his head, when he notices  
the monitor. He sees the blot, grabs a headset and starts  
talking into the mike while wildly signaling to Maladrax.

CHIP

Control room, what's going on in  
there?

INT. CONTROL ROOM TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

BENNY

(into headset)

I'm sorry, no one is in right now,  
but please leave a message at the  
sound of the beep. Beep.

EXT. STONEHENGE -- CONTINUOUS

Chip does a take. Maladrax sees the blot, and starts to try  
to move out from behind it.

We see Maladrax poke out from behind it, but then it follows  
him. He leans the other way, and is eclipsed again. He  
starts swaying and jerking back and forth.

Finally, he gets mad and snaps his fingers and the blot  
disappears.

INT. CONTROL ROOM TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

The joystick Pete is controlling gives him a great shock and  
he is flipped backward.

BENNY

Hey, it's interactive!

PETE

Of course you realize, this means  
war.

Pete gets back up and starts punching up different camera shots.

Maladrax pulls out the hypno-eye card but is now only seen in profile, addressing another camera.

EXT. STONEHENGE -- CONTINUOUS

Maladrax is looking at Camera 2 and the tally light is on Camera 1. Chip notices this and signals Maladrax to look at Camera 1. When he does, we see the tally light flick off one and go on there.

INT. CONTROL ROOM TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Monitor shows the back of Maladrax's head. He realizes and begins to turn. As he does, Pete punches up a shot from a different angle. This goes on a couple of times. One time Chip is now on screen, as he realizes his he frantically gives the cut signal, jutting his thumb at Maladrax in the background.

PETE

You see, you do learn from your mistakes, 'cause this looks exactly like our first show.

EXT. STONEHENGE -- CONTINUOUS

Chip throws down his head set and storms off toward the control truck.

EXT. CONTROL TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Chip runs into the crew who are now carrying picket signs.

CHIP

What are you doing here?

DIRECTOR

We're on strike. The secret negotiations fell through.

CHIP

What secret negotiations?

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

We don't know, it's a secret.

CHIP

There aren't any secret negotiations!  
(suddenly)  
Who's been directing the show?

DIRECTOR

You're on the air??

They rush to the truck door. It's locked. They try to smash it in. Finally, it gives. They scramble in.

INT. CONTROL ROOM TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

As the crew stumbles in, they see all the monitors showing a game of "Pong" in progress.

CHIP

Oh no, oh no! Get on that board!  
Go to Moscow, go to Moscow!

EXT. TRUCK CAB -- CONTINUOUS

We see Pete and Benny pop up in the driver's seat of the truck.

INT. ZOMAR'S CELLAR -- CONTINUOUS

Gwen is memorizing some text from one of Zomar's books.

EXT. STONEHENGE -- CONTINUOUS

Chip is talking to Maladrax.

MALADRAX

What vexes us now?

CHIP

I don't know. Some labor dispute.  
We've cut to Moscow and the spoons.  
We'll be back to you in a minute.

INT. POWERMITE EXECUTIVE SUITE -- CONTINUOUS

The executives watch as the show signs off from Moscow and cuts back to Stonehenge. Maladrax once again comes on screen. As he begins his speech again, the signal starts breaking up.

POWERS

Now what?

COPORATE HACK 1

Must be a problem with the satellite  
feed.

COPORATE HACK 2

Al Capone's vault this ain't.

EXT. STONEHENGE -- CONTINUOUS

The control truck with the satellite dish is slowly moving back and forth.

INT. TRUCK CAB -- CONTINUOUS

Benny is in the driver's seat, Pete at his side.

PETE

Come on already, get this thing moving.

BENNY

I don't know how to drive a standard.

INT. CONTROL ROOM TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

The crew is back in place, albeit swaying. A phone rings. The Asst. Director gets it.

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

It's New York. Our signal keeps breaking up.

DIRECTOR

Of course it is, someone is moving the truck! Ralph, go take care of it.

INT. TRUCK CAB -- CONTINUOUS

Benny and Pete are still at it. Ralph comes up to the driver's window.

RALPH

Hey, what are you doing in there?

Benny pulls out a map.

BENNY

Excuse me, can you point out the quickest way back to the turnpike?

As Ralph reaches in to get the map, Pete hits the power window button, closing the window on Ralph's arms. They hustle out the other door, as the truck slowly rolls away.

EXT. STONEHENGE -- CONTINUOUS

Equipment, wired to the truck, starts getting dragged off. Two cameras get turned over, breaking. Chip sees the truck rolling.

CHIP

Cut to Butte! Cut to Butte!

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Family watching the mess as they switch to Butte, with a performer who isn't ready.

SON  
What's on cable?

EXT. STONEHENGE -- CONTINUOUS

Pete and Benny slip up to the boom camera, whose DRIVER has gone to chase the truck, while the CAMERA OPERATOR is still in the air. Pete lowers the boom and they go over to the Camera Operator.

CAMERA OPERATOR  
What's going on?

PETE  
Oh, it's nuts!

Benny then grips the Operator's shoulder/neck region with the Vulcan nerve pinch, and the Operator collapses, unconscious. Pete looks at Benny in surprise.

BENNY  
Star Trek.

They assume control of the crane camera, Benny on camera, Pete driving. The others have gotten the truck back, closer to the Stonehenge circle, and reset the satellite dish.

INT. CONTROL ROOM TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

DIRECTOR  
Any other surprises? Fine. We're back on the air.

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR  
Camera's one and three are gone. We have the crane and two.

DIRECTOR  
(into mike)  
Two, stay on 'Drax. Crane, swing low, you'll be our master shot.

BENNY  
(over headset)  
Ten-four, good buddy.

Director does a worried take.

EXT. STONEHENGE -- CONTINUOUS

Pete starts fiddling with controls and the crane starts rolling and rising and swooping over the area.

BENNY  
Hey, Pete, watch it, huh?

Pete swings the crane into camera two, chasing away Operator Two. They start moving toward Maladrax. Chip sees this and panics again.

CHIP

What is going on here!

The crane starts buzzing Maladrax. Maladrax finally recognizes them.

MALADRAX

You two!

BENNY

Oh, Pete, get us out of here!

PETE

I'm trying to control this thing.

MALADRAX

Say good-bye to your miserable existence.

As Maladrax readies to end Benny and Pete's miserable existence, there is a blinding flash. Maladrax turns and sees Gwen, bathed in white, across the Stonehenge ring from him.

INT. CONTROL ROOM TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

The crew is staring at the monitor. The Director is flipping through the script.

DIRECTOR

Now what?

Finally, he tosses the script aside.

EXT. STONEHENGE -- CONTINUOUS

MALADRAX

Who art thou, maiden?

GWEN

I am Gwendolyn Lanchester, apprentice to Zomar, master wizard.

MALADRAX

Of course, Zomar's wench. You have come to join me?

GWEN

I have come to stop you.

MALADRAX

You can not.



GWEN

Yes, I can.

MALADRAX

You can not. Only the 13 banishment cards can thwart me.

GWEN

Read'em and weep.

She holds out the banishment cards.

MALADRAX

Who are you, woman?

GWEN

You will not be ruling this world anytime soon.

CHIP

Who are you? What are you talking about? You're ruining my show!

GWEN

This is no show. Maladrax was going to use this as part of his plan to enslave everyone. He is an ancient evil unleashed on this society.

CHIP

Is this true?

MALADRAX

It is.

CHIP

Great, just great. How could you do this to me? What a shame. And you had such a high "Q" rating.

(into mike)

Dave, take us off the air right---

Maladrax zaps Chip into a frog.

INT. CONTROL ROOM TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

DIRECTOR

That's it for us!

They all flee.

EXT. BANDSHELL -- CONTINUOUS

All the musicians flee.

EXT. STONEHENGE -- CONTINUOUS

Maladrax waves his arms. The cameras position themselves.

INT. CONTROL ROOM TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

The controls begins working themselves. Maladrax appears on all the monitors, except the crane camera monitor, which is still careening around.

MALADRAX

You simple mortals will be mine!

EXT. BANDSHELL -- CONTINUOUS

The instruments come to life and begin playing on their own.

EXT. STONEHENGE -- CONTINUOUS

Maladrax returns his attention to Gwen.

MALADRAX

You cannot send me back.

GWEN

Kashecky!

Maladrax shoots a beam at her. She knocks it aside, but is definitely shaken by it. Meanwhile, a shaft of light comes down. Maladrax jumps, avoiding it. The Stonehenge is glowing. Fallen stones re-set themselves. It is glowing brightly.

MALADRAX

You haven't the skills, woman!

Gwen concentrates and the light moves toward Maladrax. He shoots a bolt of lighting at her. She manages to side-step it. Benny and Pete get off the crane.

PETE

She needs help!

BENNY

Call 911!

PETE

Don't be stupid. We're in England!  
We have to get him into that light  
thing.

BENNY

Too bad we just can't beam him there.

PETE

Hey, why can't we?  
(MORE)

PETE (CONT'D)

We've got all this transmission equipment. Let's transmit him!

BENNY

You think we could?

PETE

Hey, if he can do it, why can't we?

BENNY

I hope you don't want me to waste a lot of time answering that.

Pete grabs Benny.

PETE

Come on!

They hurry off.

EXT. CONTROL CENTER TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Pete gets into the truck.

PETE

Okay, so, I'll park this thing into the light. You aim the camera at him and that should work.

Pete gets the truck into gear and drives into the Stonehenge. Benny runs back to the crane camera.

EXT. STONEHENGE CENTER STAGE -- CONTINUOUS

Maladrax tries to leave the Stonehenge, but some force stops him. He turns to Gwen.

MALADRAX

A pox upon you, girl!

He unleashes a long and vicious energy beam at Gwen. She holds against it, but is weakening. Pete comes driving into the circle, bringing the satellite dish under the shaft of light. Pete runs out of the truck's cab and into the control room. Benny gets the camera aimed at Maladrax.

BENNY

Smile, you're on Candid Camera!

Maladrax shifts his attention from Gwen to Benny. Suddenly, Benny is raised out of the seat and flies into the grasp of Maladrax.

MALADRAX

Not today, my dear.

GWEN

Benny!

INT. CONTROL ROOM TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Pete is at the control panel. He realizes what's going on. The light in the 'henge is very bright.

PETE

Oh no.

EXT. STONEHENGE CENTER STAGE -- CONTINUOUS

MALADRAX

Just back off, milady, or your friend will cease to exist.

GWEN

Oh, Benny.

She drops her arms. The light dulls a bit. Benny is trying to swing at Maladrax, who is holding him at arm's length. Suddenly, the flowers appear out of Benny's sleeve and squirt ink in Maladrax's face. Maladrax drops Benny to clutch his face in surprise. Gwen, seizing the opportunity, raises the cards again.

INT. CONTROL ROOM TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Pete starts hitting some buttons

EXT. STONEHENGE CENTER STAGE -- CONTINUOUS

All the monitors around the set display the banishment cards.

GWEN

Kashecky, lund, mazella!

The light intensifies on the satellite dish. A beam of light comes out of the crane camera and zaps Maladrax. He is sucked into the camera. The camera absorbs him. As he moves along the cable, it sputters and shorts.

INT. CONTROL ROOM TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

The image reaches the control panel. For a moment we see Maladrax's panic-stricken face on all monitors, then they all blow out.

EXT. STONEHENGE -- CONTINUOUS

Pete runs out of the truck to watch as a power surge shoots from the satellite dish.

The beam hits the point of light above Stonehenge and is absorbed. The light grows brighter, then there is an explosion with a blinding flash of light.

As the scene clears, Stonehenge is broken up into ruins again. Pete and Gwen run up to Benny, who is still on the ground, feigning unconsciousness. Pete cradles Benny's head.

PETE

Benny, Benny, are you okay? Speak to me! Speak to me!

BENNY

What do you want me to say?

PETE

I don't know, how about---

Suddenly annoyed, he lets go of Benny's head and it drops to the ground.

PETE (CONT'D)

What's wrong with you? Don't you know you scared me half to death?

BENNY

I'm sorry, Pete.

PETE

Yeah, well, don't let it happen again.

BENNY

How about you guys? You okay?

PETE

Oh, now you get around to asking?

GWEN

We're fine, Benny.

PETE

You did it, Gwen. That was awesome!

GWEN

I couldn't have done it without you. Thank you, boys.

PETE

It was nothing.

BENNY

Hey, speak for yourself.

PETE

Oh, stop your whining.

BENNY

Well, it looks like our work here is done...

Chip the frog hops over and ribits.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Then again---

INT. ZOMAR'S CELLAR -- DAY

Benny and Pete are watching Gwen, who is leafing through the book of magic. Benny is holding Chip the frog.

BENNY

So what's the deal, we gotta kiss him or what?

GWEN

Here it is...

She looks at the frog.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Petrozza con loopy.

The frog becomes Chip.

CHIP

Where am I?

GWEN

In the home of Zomar, wizard supreme.

CHIP

Where's Maladrax? Did he take over the world?

PETE

We got rid of him.

CHIP

I had no idea. I'm such a jerk for helping him.

BENNY

That's nothing. Imagine how Pete here feels, he let him loose.

PETE

I did not.

CHIP

Who are you people? What was all this about?

GWEN

It's a long story.

CHIP

Tell me. Maybe we're looking at a mini-series here.

GWEN  
First things first.

She puts the book into the burning fireplace with the deck of cards.

PETE  
Gwen! What are you doing?

GWEN  
The age of magic is ended. This was its finale.

PETE  
But people would love to have magic in their lives.

GWEN  
That doesn't mean they should have it, Pete. Times have changed and mankind has moved on.

PETE  
So just like that, you're a civilian again?

GWEN  
I can still do some basic things, but nothing grandiose.

The book burns brightly. A wind blows. A blinding light flashes and---

EXT. LOT -- DAY

Chip, Gwen, Benny and Pete are now standing in an empty lot where Zomar's brownstone once stood.

CHIP  
This is too surreal for me.  
(suddenly)  
Ohmigod! Powers'll be looking for me. I wonder how we did in the overnight ratings? Oh, man, how am I going to explain any of this to Powers?

PETE  
Tell him magic happens.

He leaves. As he does, a fly buzzes by and he catches it with his tongue. Then he is gone.

BENNY  
This is amazing.

GWEN

It was quite a spell.

BENNY

I'll say. I never saw this much undeveloped property in Manhattan before.

PETE

Gwen, so what happens now? What will you do?

GWEN

I don't know. All my life, I have served Zomar, as did my family before me. The only life I know is that of magic.

Pete and Benny come up with the same idea at the same time.

PETE

Then we have something right up your alley!

EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP -- NIGHT

In all it's bawdy glory.

INT. NIGHT CLUB -- NIGHT

Sign posted now reads, "Johnson the Astounding and Benny and Gwen." Pete is on stage in his tuxedo. Gwen is in a showgirl assistant outfit. Benny is floating above the stage in his tux. Gwen and Pete wave their arms and Benny drops to the floor, a little faster than expected. He springs up, somewhat dazed. Applause, applause. Every time Benny moves, things drop out of his jacket: silverware, doves, billiard balls, flowers, etc. Next they are about to saw someone in half.

PETE

(to Gwen)

See, I told you, Gwen. People do need a little magic in their lives.

(to audience)

Thank you. And now, our most amazing trick! Benny, into the box.

BENNY

Beg pardon?

PETE

I said into the box.

BENNY

(pointing to Gwen)

I thought you said that was her job!



PETE

Oh, yeah, I buy her that great looking outfit so I could hide it in a box. Think, man.

BENNY

But, but, but---

Pete puts him in. Gwen locks him up.

GWEN

Don't worry, Benny, I'm watching out for you.

BENNY

Thanks. But are you going to be able to handle that two-man saw?

GWEN

What two-man saw?

Pete puts on work goggles and revs up a chain saw.

PETE

Anyone can use a hand saw! Check this out!

BENNY

Pete!

We fade out before the carnage ensues.

THE END