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THE DR. PIT SHOW: ONE NIGHT ONLY and THE BALLOONMAN'S CHAIR

TWO ONE ACT COMEDIES

Ву

James J. Walker

B. A., University of Montana, 1972

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts in Drama

University of Montana

1986

Approved by

WU WIND WALLEY

Dean, Graduate School

Date

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ProQuest LLC. 789 East Eisenhower Parkway P.O. Box 1346 Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346 Walker, James J., M.A., December 1986

Drama

THE DR. PIT SHOW: ONE NIGHT ONLY and THE BALLOONMAN'S CHAIR
Two One Act Comedies

Advisor: Rolland Meinholtz

The play THE DR. PIT SHOW: ONE NIGHT ONLY is fashioned after an old time magic medicine show. Dr. Pit has members of the audience come on stage and drink a magic elixir that makes the drinker become a person who lived 600 years ago in England. The elixir's success turns sour when the volunteers knock Dr. Pit unconscious after mistaking him for the evil sorcerer Wendel. The volunteers try to re-order their lives but find it difficult. They are convinced they are in a castle dungeon. The procenium is the south wall of the dungeon; a wall the volunteers cannot see through, but a wall through which people mysteriously come and go. Denise, Dr. Pit's assistant, revives Dr. Pit, several times, and together they bring order to an unorderly situation.

THE BALLOONMAN'S CHAIR is a play about two men, Terrance and Clinton, who want to sit in a chair in a park. When one sits in the chair the other tries to get him out. The possession of the chair by the two actors becomes so obsessive that they forget the script they have rehearsed. They shed their roles of Terrance and Clinton in order to have control of the chair. When the director of the play fires them on stage the actors resort to violence and inadvertently involve some of the audience. They play ends in a wild chase and with the simple and kind balloonman sitting on the chair selling balloons and yo-yos just as the "original" script had intended.

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THE DR. PIT SHOW: ONE NIGHT ONLY A One Act Comedy

bу

James J. Walker

CAST OF CHARACTERS

DR. PIT Modern day alchemist

DENISE Pit's wife and assistant

ENID/EDDIE Confidant of Lord Leo/Butcher

GUARD/RALPH Medieval Guard/Butcher

ERNIE/BOB Medieval Jailer/College Professor

HILDA/ELOISE Wendel Bane's Daughter/Newspaper

Reporter

LEO/HANK Lord Leopold of Sutmont/Rancher

MARTHA/ALICE Lady Martha of Sutmont/Rancher's

Wife

NIMMY/PETE Prince Nimmy of Sutmont/Hank and

Alice's son

MORT Theater security guard

ATTIE Theater security quard

NIMMY JR. Ten year old boy resembling

PETE/NIMMY

LADY IN AUDIENCE

THE DR. PIT SHOW: ONE NIGHT ONLY

A One Act Play

(The stage is fashioned after a medieval dungeon. There are two exits, one stage left and one stage right. There are also two archway exits upstage left and upstage right. front of the upstage right archway is a well, in which Wendel's unseen fish swims. Downstage left is a portable On the lab are 10 to 12 chemistry flasks, a vaporizer and a blue bottle. Inside the flasks is a powdery, ashy substance. On the upstage left wall are two pair of chains for prisoners.

The play begins before the Dr. Pit Show begins, as the crowd is seating themselves. DR. PIT enters from the lobby, leading EDDIE and RALPH who are carrying props for the show. EDDIE has 2 boxes labeled "antidote". He is pushing these boxes with a loading dolly. RALPH is carrying a box marked "explosives". PIT carries a detonator box with wires and pushdown handle.

PIT (on stage)

Right up here, fellas.

(EDDIE and RALPH hop on stage and are giddy as kids at a birthday party.)

PIT (to Ralph)

Put that here, would you?

RALPH

You bet.

PIT

Thanks.

(RALPH puts box of explosives by well. PIT squats down and attaches detonator.)

PIT

Put those boxes underneath my portable lab.

EDDIE

O.K.

(EDDIE unloads antidote while RALPH wheels dolly off stage right then comes back.

PIT goes to lab, takes flasks out of lab and places them on top.)

PIT

(reading their labels)

I'll try the castle guard, Enid, Ernie . . . Hilda, of course. Maybe I should try Leo.

(He remembers Eddie and Ralph) Thanks fellows. As soon as we get the house receipts counted I'll get you your money.

EDDIE

Just let us volunteer. That's good enough for us.

PIT

If that's what you want.

(EDDIE and RALPH go sit down in audience. PIT addresses audience.) We're a little late in setting up ladies and gentlemen, so it will be just a few minutes before we start.

DENISE (from lobby entrance)

Psst!

PIT

Excuse me.

(PIT goes up aisle toward lobby. Denise leads MORT and

ATTIE, two theatre security guards, through the lobby door.)

DENISE

These security guards want to see you.

PIT

May I help you?

MORT

We were wondering about those explosives you were bringing in.

PIT

Don't worry. Just props. Actually an experiment that doesn't work.

ATTIE

We figured it was something like that.

MORT

Also, did you get permission to dig a hole in the stage for that caldron thing.

PIT

Do I need permission?

(DENISE hurries backstage.)

ATTTE

Yes, you do. That's private property.

PIT

We'll fix it up good as new.

ATTIE

How are you going to do that?

PIT

Can we talk about this a little later?

MORT

We'll talk about it right now. You can't fix a hole up good as new. A hole is used to put things in -- usually old things -- and then when the hole is covered up it's been used.

PIT

The hole is?

MORT

Yes, the hole!

PIT

I can see your point. I, however, see holes as corridors to new frontiers, windows to new dimensions.

MORT

You don't either. You're a side show, con man trying to pull a fast one on us.

PIT

Sir, I am an apprentice alchemist.

MORT

That and \$20 will get my car lubed.

(DENISE comes from backstage with a forged contract.)

DENISE

We have a contract here signed by (name of head of theatre) that authorizes us to dig our hole after which we will repair any damages.

ATTIE

Why the heck didn't you say so?

DENISE

I didn't think it was necessary.

PIT

(loudly)

Ladies and gentlemen, we'll start as soon as possible.

MORT

(grabs contract)

Lemme see that.

(mumbles, reading to himself, then

aloud)

... I hereby grant permission for one said hole ... mmmm ... signed (name of the theater owner). I didn't know (name of owner)'s middle initial was "P".

DENISE

Yea, I . . . Pedro.

MORT

Pedro?

DENISE

Yes.

ATTIE

I'll be darned. I never knew that.

PIT

I'm terribly embarrassed about this. You certainly should have been contacted.

MORT

Darn tootin'.

PIT

I will make it a point that (owner's name) hears what a fine job you're doing here.

(PIT reaches for contract. MORT keeps it from him.)

MORT

Save your thanks and that two bit line you're feeding me. I'm going to check this out.

PIT

Oh. That's . . . uh . . . fine. Go right ahead. However, we have a show to put on. So if you'll excuse us?

ATTIE

Nothing we can do now anyway, I suppose. Just make sure you don't ruin anymore of the stage.

PIT

Wouldn't think of it. I appreciate your concern.

(MORT and ATTIE walk through lobby door.)

MORT

You know (owner's name)'s number?

(PIT and DENISE walk down the aisle. Their conversation is hurried stage whispers.)

DENISE

I think (name of owner) is in Des Moines.

PIT

That'll give us plenty of time.

DENISE

Yeah, but we'll have to strike quickly. Hey, and listen, fifty dollars. No more. O.K.?

PIT (avoiding the question)

We're running late.

(They go on stage and exit stage right. Lights go down.)

DENISE

(yells from her spot at light controls backstage)

And now, ladies and gentlemen, direct from his engagements in Europe, most notably from the Sutmont Estate in England, the one and only, Dr. Pit!

(Lights go up. PIT trips on stage putting on his wizard robe and hat, carrying an alchemy book.)

PIT

Thank you, Denise. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Years ago, if you happened to see my traveling show, you would, of course, remember Dr. Pit's Really Good Relaxation Vapor. (shows vaporizer)

Well, I still sell and use this marvelous product but since my amazing discoveries in England a few months ago, my show has taken on a different dimension; a most intriguing and, I hope for you, entertaining one. I have become an apprentice in alchemy. And my master, who has been dead for 600 years, is none other than Wendel Bane of Sutmont Castle in England, perhaps the greatest alchemist of all time. In fact, I have rendered the set to be a very close facsimile of the dungeon at Sutmont Castle, where Wendel practiced his sorcery. There were many other great alchemists, but none were as practical as Wendel. In 1303, for example, Alfonse of Vienna was convinced that reality was the complete fantasy of a carp . . . a goldfish that he saw swimming in the Danube. And deaf to the taunts of the peasants and royalty of the local duchy he tried to catch the fish and teach it certain primitive dances. Absurd? Impractical? Of course. And yet this idea of turning a fish into a man almost became a reality when Wendel, 100 years later, changed some of Alfonse's formulas, added to some, discarded some as merely menus, and almost! almost! changed a fish into a mammal. But he missed some one ingredient . . . And today, 600 years later, the experiment continues. For in this well I have a fish that, when the stars are right, will become a mammal. Wendel had many other experiments. Here, for example, is the celebrated "Wendel Box".

(shows box with "explosives" written on it)

His interest in explosives at first seemed to be an attempt to overtake the Chinese, who were years ahead of the Europeans in such things. But later, it became evident that he needed the explosives as protection against the ruler of Sutmont Castle, Lord Leo. But again, Wendel miscalculated and instead of creating a quality gun powder, all that comes out is this . . .

(He pushes down lever of detonator and a loud farting sound comes out of the box.)

All it needs is just one or two more ingredients, just as the fish experiment does.

(He goes to lab.)

But his most important experiment, tonight, I am going to share with you. Tonight I am going to ask for volunteers to become travelers in time. Not to go from one place to another, but to become a person who lived 600 years ago. A person who lived in the Sutmont Castle. How can this be? Six months ago while playing my show in England, near Sutmont, the keepers of the estate practically gave me Wendel's alchemy book, along with all his experiments and apparatus. Here they are before you.

(shows flasks)

In these flasks are chemicals -- carbon based molecules, protein, nucleic acids, all dehydrated and incinerated, freeze dried, if you will. These chemicals are the chemical make-up of people of 600 years ago.

(shows blue bottle)

And when they are combined with this amazing blue elixir it transforms the drinker into a person who is living 600 years ago.

(goes back to flasks)

Here is Lord Leo. Here is his wife, Martha. Here are the chemicals of Ernest Rumpleshorn, the castle's jailer. And many more . . . The ingredients, the measurements, the calculations to make all this possible are in this amazing alchemy book of Wendel's . . .

(shows book)

And now it is time to continue Wendel's work. But first, let me assure you this is perfectly safe. No one will be harmed in the least. Here is the antidote that brings the volunteers back to our time.

(shows antidote)

And also of importance, anyone who volunteers will receive \$100 on the spot. If the experiment is successful . . . and I say "if" because in many of Wendel's experiments there seems to be some one ingredient missing. But I believe I've worked the formula out to where I'm almost sure it will work. So, if . . . or when the experiment works, each volunteer will receive \$5000! But that would be a mere pittance compared to the book offers, the personal

appearances, the commercials, you'll be offered for being the first bonified travelers in time . . . So, let's begin. Who would like to volunteer.

(EDDIE and RALPH rush up on stage.)

PIT

Now are you sure you two want to try this?

EDDIE

You bet.

PIT

I commandeered these two to help me with my props and they want to volunteer.

EDDIE

We get \$100, right?

PIT

Of course. Denise! This is my lovely wife and assistant, Denise.

(DENISE brings money box in)

We'll dip into our coffers here.

(DENISE does not want to spend \$100 on the volunteers because they are short of cash. The following short dialogue is spoken in stage whispers.)

DENISE

Next time, it's fifty. I don't care what you say.

PIT

O.K. O.K.

(He digs out \$200 and gives it to EDDIE and RALPH)

Here you are.

EDDIE

All right.

PIT

And remember, if the experiment works you will receive \$5000.

RALPH

I feel it working already.

PIT

We haven't done anything yet.

RALPH

Well, I'm ready for it to happen.

PIT

Let's get to know you a little first.

EDDIE

I'm Eddie Beecham and this is my brother, Ralph Beecham. We own one of the best independent butcher shops in the Northwest.

RALPH

"Eddie and Ralph's". You've probably heard of us.

PIT

No.

EDDIE

(to Ralph)

Told you he wouldn't know.

PIT

Of course, I'm new to the area. Is it customary here for butchers to bring their work with them?

(PIT picks EDDIE'S knife holster and shows the audience a gleaming, cutting knife.)

EDDIE

Well, it's good advertisement. This here is the top of the line cutting knife. Great for slicing roast, tenderloin, rump, anything you want.

RALPH

Exposure is important in a business.

PIT

You're getting plenty now.

EDDIE

That's what we figure. Plus we'll get \$5000, right?

PIT

Hopefully. At any rate, I think you will make excellent volunteers.

(He hands back knife.)

EDDIE

Thanks.

RALPH

Like I tell ya, I'm ready.

PIT

We need some more volunteers. You sir. Yes, fine, this way.

(BOB JUPER, a well dressed, handsome professor comes up from audience. DENISE brings out box. She is reluctant to hand out any more money, but she helps PIT count out \$100. They look anxiously at each other.)

PIT

I hope, sir, you won't mind taking some "ones"?

BOB

No, I don't want any money. Thank you.

PIT

You don't? That is interesting. Why not?

BOB

My name is Robert Juper. I'm a professor of psychology at the university.

PIT

Ah, and you've come to discredit alchemy, am I right? You think I'm deranged, don't you? Just as people 600 years ago thought Wendel mad.

BOB

No, not at all. Actually I think there is a lot of validity in what you are trying to do.

PIT

(surprised).

Oh.

BOB

I don't know much about the process of alchemy and sorcery, nor about this Wendel of Sutmont, but . . .

PETE

(interrupts from audience)

I do.

BOB

. . . but I believe there is much to be learned. The sciences, especially psychology, have spurned such practices, and as a result have missed valuable insight into human nature and the world around us.

PIT

Well, good, I've found a convert.

BOB

Not exactly. I'm here in the interest of science.

PIT

I'm honored.

(He checks flasks. Hilda Bane's

flask is next.)

We should have a couple more volunteers.

(PETE raises his hand.)

No, we need a lady. You, for instance?

ELOISE

Me?

PIT

Yes, you.

ELOISE

No, I don't think so.

PIT

Oh, come, come. You get paid \$100 and have fun, too.

ELOISE

Well, O.K.

(ELOISE comes up.

DENISE comes out with a bundle of bills. PIT gives them to

ELOISE.)

PIT

Here is your money. Is it all here, Denise?

DENISE

Yeah.

PIT

You are lovely. What is your name?

ELOISE

Thank you. Eloise Unglaub.

PIT

And what do you do?

ELOISE

I work for the (local newspaper).

PIT

That explains why you're taking notes.

ELOISE

(shows notepad)

Yes, I was assigned to write a review of this show.

PIT

Really? Well, now you'll get first hand experience.

ELOISE

I guess so. Let me get this straight. (writes) You're going to make us drink someone else's ashes?

PIT

No, no. Not ashes. Incinerated and dehydrated nucleic acids, protein, carbon.

ELOISE

(looks in flask)

Looks like ashes to me.

PIT

They're not.

ELOISE

Are you sure it's safe?

PIT

Absolutely. I've done it many times. Here, for example, is Hilda Bane's flask. Wendel Bane's daughter. By itself her ashes . . . uh . . . chemicals are a bit unappetizing, but when this magic blue elixir is added . . .

(He pours liquid into flask. It

bubbles.)

. . . the ingredients combine into a completely new and marvelous mixture -- much like Cherry Coke.

ELOISE

(writing)

Uh huh.

PIT

This is your notebook?

(PIT takes notebook from her.)

ELOISE

Yeah, no . . . that's confidential.

RALPH

Say, we were thinking about having you guys do advertise-ments for us.

ELOISE

I'm a reporter. You'll have to talk to "advertising".

PIT

(reading notes)

Let's see. "Play -- hokey magic show".

ELOISE

(under her breath)

Oh boy.

PIT

"Dr. Pit, obvious phoney". Phoney?!

ELOISE

(thinking fast)

That was at the start. And, uh, what I meant, uh . . . what I meant was phoney as in "fun". It's kind of a short hand.

PITT

Phoney is short for fun, I see . . . let's see what else you have. "Eddie and Ralph -- butchers."

EDDIE

We're on Catlin and 11th. We have a special on summer smoked sausage. Be sure you get that in there.

PIT

"Juper is a hunk. Dressed to kill."?!

(ELOISE snatches notebook back)

You are dressed rather spiffy, professor.

BOB

My wife dresses me, pretty much.

PIT

Ah, a married man. I'm sorry, Eloise, I am running a family show. Is your wife here, professor?

BOB

No.

PIT

Ah, then you might get lucky, Eloise, who knows?

ELOISE

Listen, you can have your \$100. I'll just sit down.

PTT

No, no, no. Please stay. I'm just kidding. And you take it so well, too. No, it's good to be skeptical. Just don't let it stop you from having fun.

(PIT checks flasks)

PIT

O.K. We have 1, 2, 3, 4 . . . I think we can handle one more.

(PETE runs on stage followed by HANK and ALICE.)

PETE

Can we come up?

PIT

Three people? Well? . . . Are you a family?

PETE

Yes.

PIT

(looks at flasks)

Sure. Three will be fine. Come on up.

(HANK and ALICE come on stage. DENISE comes out with a check.)

EDDIE

Say doc, who's ashes am I going to drink?

PIT

They aren't ashes. They are freeze dried nucleic acids and protein. I'll get to that in just a second. Ed.

(PIT gives check to HANK.)

You'll have to accept my check. The house wasn't as large as I expected tonight. Perfectly good anywhere.

PETE

We don't care about that.

PIT

Oh, fine.

(PIT reaches for check.)

HANK

The hell we don't.

PIT

All right. Just put your name right there. You are a family?

PETE

Yes. This is my mom and dad, Alice and Hank. And I'm Pete Henderson.

PIT

How do you do? What is your line of work, Mr. Henderson?

HANK

Say, this here check is only for \$100. There are three of us here. I thought you said \$100 per person.

PIT

So I did. Denise, write out two more checks, please. To Hank and Alice Henderson.

DENISE

I'll just make it out for an even thousand. What the heck.

PIT

No, no. Just a hundred. She's quite the kidder. (DENISE rolls her eyes and exits stage right.)

Now sir, what do you do?

HANK

I'm a rancher.

PIT

A tiller of the soil! And interested in wizardry.

HANK

Oh naw. Not at all. Pete brought us here. He's the one who likes this stuff. He's always reading about Merlin and Arthur and . . .

PIT

I should make a point here. Merlin is fictional. He never existed.

PETE

(at well)

Wow!

PIT

Here. Stay away from the caldron.

PETE

Is that thing real?

PIT

I assure you it is. So you like alchemy?

PETE

I've been interested in alchemy ever since I was sick.

ALICE

Pete's been in the hospital for six weeks.

PIT

That's too bad. What was wrong?

PETE

I had a blood disorder.

PIT

Maybe you shouldn't be up here.

PETE

No, I'm fine now.

ALICE

The doctor said he is completely cured.

PIT

Wonderful. And you say you know about alchemy?

PETE

I know the period you're talking about. What I've read said that Wendel of Sutmont Castle was not a true alchemist, but a charlatan.

(PIT twitches; it is as if his personality is changing to an evil, paranoid wizard)

He promised to help Lord Leopold become King of England, but instead blew himself up, along with half of Leopold's castle.

PIT

(in paranoid trance)

Those books you read are poop! He didn't blow himself. His experiments were sabotaged . . . otherwise . . . my name would be in a place of honor along with Copernicus and Newton . . .

PETE

Your name?

PIT

(snaps out of trance)

My name?

PETE

Yeah, you were talking about Wendel.

PIT

Oh, yes. Did I say "my name" I meant Wendel's name, of course. Wonderful man. Highly underrated You do know quite a bit.

PETE

Another thing I was wondering about, this castle doesn't look very authentic to me.

PTT

What do you mean, "not authentic"?!

PETE

I don't know. It looks kind of fakey.

PIT

FAKEY! How would you know?. Have you ever been at the Sutmont Castle?

PETE

Well, no.

PIT

Well, I have. This is darn authentic.

(He opens book to show map of

Sutmont Castle.)

See, here's the dungeon, right here.

PETE

Oh, yeah.

PIT

And see where the stage ends here, that is where the south wall is. And out in the audience would be the garden entrance. And there's the stables.

PETE

(points to audience member)

That lady is sitting in the third stall.

PIT

Yeah. Right there. So what do you think now?

PETE

I guess it's O.K.

PIT

You betcha, it's O.K.

(He puts book underneath in the portable lab.)

So, let's get started. First of all, are you all relaxed? If not I will give you a spray of Dr. Pit's Really Good Relaxation Vapor.

(He pulls out the vaporizer.) It relaxes tensions of all kinds. It gives you a feeling of supreme contentedness.

HANK

I ain't taken no goddamn drugs. I'll tell you that. It's bad enough having to drink a bunch of ashes.

PIT

They're not ashes!

PETE

It isn't drugs, dad. It's laughing gas, nitrous oxide. It's harmless in small amounts and it helps you relax.

PIT

Some people call it nitrous oxide. I prefer to call it Dr. Pit's Really Good Relaxation Vapor.

(PETE smiles and shrugs.)

RALPH

I'll have a hit.

EDDIE

Yeah. Me, too.

PIT

All right.

(PIT sprays RALPH and EDDIE. They perk up even more. RALPH acts as if he has just had a shot of strong whiskey.)

RALPH

Oooeee!

ALICE

I'd like a spray.

EDDIE

It's great stuff, lady.

PETE

Me, too.

PIT

That's the spirit.

(PIT sprays PETE and ALICE.)

HANK

I guess it won't hurt me none.

(PIT sprays him)

That's pretty goddamn nice.

PIT

Eloise?

ELOISE

Sure.

(PIT sprays her.)

PIT

Professor?

BOB

No, thank you.

RALPH

I need another hit.

PIT

No, you're fine. Now, before you (points to lab) are seven flasks containing less than a gram of precisely measured chemicals that correspond exactly with the chemical makeup of people who lived over 600 years ago. I will now activate these ingredients by pouring into each flask the amazing blue elixir that Wendel Bane invented and I perfected.

(He pours elixir into flasks then gives them the potion.)

You, Ralph, have Lapus Lump, Castle Guard. Eddie, you have Enid Skagg, Leo's confidant. Eloise, you have Hilda Bane, Wendel's daughter. Professor, Ernest Rumpleshorn. You, Pete, will have Prince Nimmy's flask.

RALPH

Can I change if I don't like Lapus?

PIT

No. You Alice are Lady Martha. And Hank you have Lord Leo of Sutmont. All right, now here's the big moment. Everyone close your eyes. Ready!? And drink! Drink it all.

Drink it all. Quickly! Swallow! Good. Everyone relax. That's good. Now open your eyes . . . You!

(He points to RALPH.)

RALPH

Huh?

PIT

How do you feel?

RALPH

I'm ready to go, doc.

PIT

Yes, but how do you feel?

RALPH

Fine.

PIT

Who are you?

RALPH

I'm Ralph Beecham. My brother and I own . . .

PIT

Yes, Yes, you're butchers. Don't you feel any different?

RALPH

No.

PIT

Like maybe your personality is changing?

RALPH

No, my personality feels the same.

PIT

(goes to BOB)

How about you?

BOB

I don't feel any different.

PIT

Do you feel any schism in your psyche?

HANK

I don't want any goddamn schisms, I can tell you that.

PIT

It's not working.

(PIT goes to ELOISE. RALPH picks up the bottle that PIT left on the well.)

RALPH

Maybe if I had another hit.

PIT

No! No! Don't touch that bottle.

(PIT rushes for his blue bottle. In his haste he knocks the bottle out of RALPH'S hand and it falls down into the well. They both look down the well. PIT turns to RALPH.)

PIT

You idiot! That bottle contains over 600 years of priceless, irreplaceable knowledge.

(PIT grabs a wire from the stage -- it's live -- and throws it down the well.)

Get down there and get it.

RALPH

Mel?

PIT

The rest of you hold on to this cord.

(The rest of the volunteers grab the wire. PIT turns to RALPH.)

Well!!

RALPH

There's a big fish down there.

PIT

Hurry!

(Ralph lowers himself down.)

RALPH

Nice fishy.

(DENISE enters and takes PIT aside.)

DENISE

Don't worry about the flask. The safest place in the world for it is in the well.

PIT

You're right.

DENISE

Be careful with that wire. It might be live.

PIT

Hmm, yes. (goes to well) Did you find it yet?

PETE

I hope this wire doesn't have any juice in it.

PIT

No, No, hold on. (into well) Find it?

RALPH

Got 'er. Found it on a ledge.

(PIT gives sigh of relief.)

Strange looking fish.

PIT

Stay away from the water.

RALPH

Oops.

(The audience hears RALPH slip then a splash. Sparks shoot up from the well. The stage lights flicker then black out. Electricity shoots back and forth on the stage. The volunteers are shocked. There is chaos, screaming. PIT yells orders, but no one hears. Finally lights come up. Volunteers slowly pick themselves up from the floor. PIT looks around as RALPH/GUARD comes up out of the well with the bottle. PIT takes the bottle from his hand. The well maintains a glow from within.)

PIT

(looking at bottle)

It's all right! It's all right!

BOB/ERNIE

(slouches up to PIT)

What are you doing here?

PIT

Oh, Oh, yes. Are the rest of you all right?

(RALPH falls from the well to the stage floor, then slowly

gets up.)

BOB/ERNIE

Who are you?

PIT

Who am I? I'm . . . Who are you?

ERNIE

Ernie.

PIT

Ernie? You're not Bob Juper?

ERNIE

I ain't no Juper.

PIT

Yes. Professor Robert Juper.

ERNIE

No. I'm the jail keeper. What are you doing down here?

PIT

A jailer? Where?

ERNIE

Here.

PIT

Here? You mean this is your dungeon?

ERNIE

Yeah.

PIT

Dare I hope . . . the one missing ingredient . . . (goes to EDDIE/ENID)

And who are you?

EDDIE/ENID

I am Lord Enid. King Leopold's personal confidant.

PIT

I see. (to RALPH/GUARD) And who are you?

RALPH/GUARD

I'm . . .

EDDIE/ENID

He's a mere guard.

PIT

I see. Is that right?

GUARD

I . . . I . . .

PIT

What's the matter?

GUARD

(looking at audience)

Why are all those strange people looking at us?

ENID

What people? There is only a wall there.

PIT

I've found it! I've found it! Something Wendel couldn't conceive! Electricity activates the elixir.

GUARD

What elixir?

ENID

Elixir?

PIT

(goes to ELOISE/HILDA)

And who are you, my sweet?

HILDA

(whispering)

You know damn well who I am.

PIT

I do?

HILDA

(whispering)

That's an excellent disguise you have on, father.

PIT

Father!

HILDA

We must talk. But for now, follow my lead.

ENID

Why are you whispering?

PIT

She says . . .

HILDA

(cuts in)

I prefer not to talk.

ENID

That's good.

PIT

(not understanding Hilda yet)
Now, now. We mustn't have any inhibitions here. We don't
want to obstruct the potion's power. Tell me all about
yourself.

(ENID goes to LEO/HANK. Under his breath he mutters "potion's power?")

HILDA

(giving PIT a knowing wink)

I'm Hilda Bane. Wendel Bane was my father.

PIT

Wendel Bane! Oh, finally! Finally! I've done the impossible. Me! A two bit side show man has tracked a hole in the universe . . .

MARTHA/ALICE

Why is he talking to the wall?

PIT

Was? . . . You said "was". Is he dead?

ENID

Yes, he's dead. He blew up along with his foul experiments.

PIT

Really? Did anyone find his body?

ENID

No.

PIT

Then how do you know he's dead?

LEO

How do you know so much about Wendel?

PIT

Who are you?

LEO

Who am I?! I am King Leopold.

PIT

The king? Pardon me, your majesty. (to audience)

He thinks he's a king.

LEO

Who are you talking to?

PIT

No one. Where is your kingdom, sire?

LEO

Here. England.

PIT

I've never heard of a King Leo of England.

LEO

Edward pretends to be king, but after I invade London I will be the rightful ruler. Now may I ask, who the devil are you?

PIT

No, no. First I want to find out who my next two volunteers are.

LEO

That's the queen and Prince Nimmy.

PIT

Lady Martha and Lord Nimmy of Sutmont.

NIMMY/PETE

Yes.

PIT

It's a total success! You are all back 600 years.

LEO

Six hundred years?

PIT

And you are Lord Leopold, or Mad Leo, as the history books call you.

LEO

Mad Leo! How dare you.

PIT

(to audience)

This is far more than I expected. To have one time traveler would be wonderful, but to have seven! My guess is when the electricity from the wire activated the elixir in the volunteers, it also activated the elixir in the bottle. Now this bottle is pure magic!

(He laughs evilly.)

MARTHA

He keeps talking to the wall.

ENID

Your majesty, perhaps we should have this sorcerer locked up. He's either mad or dealing with the spirit world; neither are safe for you.

PIT

I'll be right with you, Sir Enid. Don't worry about a thing. Your majesty, may I talk to the, uh, queen?

LEO

No, you may not.

MARTHA

I'd like to talk with him, Leo.

LEO

My dear, he is a sorcerer. He has put us all under a spell. Why else would we be down here in the dungeon wearing these silly clothes?

PIT

If you're worried about clothes, I have a rack of 15th century attire in my dressing room. I purchased them from the same estate . . .

LEO

Quiet! We've heard enough from you.

NIMMY

Perhaps this is Wendel.

(LEO, ENID, GUARD & ERNIE advance on PIT, looking at him suspiciously.)

NIMMY

You are, aren't you?

HILDA

No. He isn't my father. He doesn't even look like him.

PIT

That's right. I don't even look like him.

ENID

Wendel has enough power to alter his features.

LEO

You are Wendel in disguise.

PIT

Oh my, this is getting messy. Everyone back in line. (He reaches in lab and pulls out

the antidote.)

Now, let's all go back stage and I'll administer the antidote.

ENID

You mean poison! Grab him!

(GUARD and ERNIE grab PIT. The antidote spills out on the stage.)

LEO

So, Wendel, you did escape death. It was always odd that we couldn't find your remains.

PIT

No, I'm Dr. Pit.

LEO

Yes, of course.

NIMMY

Father, aren't you happy Wendel is alive?

LEO

Only that it will give me the pleasure of killing the traitor again.

NIMMY

You tried to kill him?

MARTHA

It's best that he is disposed of, Nimmy darling.

HILDA

I won't let you kill my father.

PIT

I'm not your father.

HILDA

Oh yes. I won't let you kill . . . this complete stranger.

LEO

(ignoring Hilda)

Perhaps more sulfur in the kiln. What do you think, Enid?

ENID

Yes, apparently we didn't have enough last time.

T.EO

And now we have the Blue Elixir.

(He takes bottle from Pit.)

NIMMY

Father, no. I won't allow it. Wendel is a great sorcerer.

LEO

Your allegiance is becoming suspect, Nimmy.

(He turns to Pit.)

Now Wendel, where is your book of alchemy?

PIT

This has gone far enough. Denise!

(DENISE enters from stage left.)

DENISE

All right, all right. I'm sorry you people will have to get off the stage now. We have a show to put on here. Why don't you all go back stage to the dressing rooms?

LEO

Who are you?

DENISE

I'm the stage manager.

ENID

She's in league with Wendel. I'm sure of it.

PIT

Call the cops, Denise.

LEO

Ernie, take her to your chambers and lock her up.

DENISE

Keep away from me. (to audience) Someone call the police!

(She runs off stage left. A
LADY IN THE AUDIENCE goes
through lobby door to get
security guards. On stage
ERNIE follows DENISE off left.
There is a scuffle off stage,
then a crash. DENISE groans.
Sound of body falling is
heard. ERNIE re-enters.)

ERNIE

I don't think we need to lock her up.

LEO

Leave her.

PIT

Oh, my god. Leo, listen to me. You are under a spell. You all drank my magic elixir. You are really a narrow-minded, semi-literate rancher living in (state play is playing). You are not a king.

LEO

Ernie, bind and gag him.

(ERNIE grabs him.)

PIT

Give me that elixir, at least. It means nothing to you.

LEO

Yes, I realize this holds your magical powers. I will be sure it's safe, Wendel.

PIT

Dr. Pit!

LEO

Take some rope and tie him up in your chambers.

PIT

I won't stand for this. Help! Help!

(Ernie and Guard take him back-

stage left.)

Denise, get up and call the cops!

LEO

Now, at last! By mere chance, I have captured Wendel's magic elixir. There is nothing that can stand in my way to unify this backward island.

ENID

We can call it "Leoland".

LEO

Yes.

(Unnoticed by the others, Guard enters.)

MARTHA

Leo, why was Wendel talking to the wall?

LEO

I don't know.

GUARD

It could be wall spirits. I think I saw them. It was strange. It was like I saw them and I didn't see them at the same time.

ENID

Shut up.

GUARD

O.K.

(GUARD sulks and goes to wall. He puts his hand through the wall, which really isn't there. However, no one is watching him.)

HILDA

Your majesty, please spare that man. I'm sure you are mistaken when you think he is my father.

LEO

And what do you think, Nimmy?

NIMMY

I agree with Hilda.

LEO

Just as I thought. Can't you see past those star-struck eyes of yours? She is trying to protect her father.

ENID

She's as mad as Wendel.

HILDA

I am not mad!

(ENID restrains her. Her notebook is shaken loose.)

LEO

(picks it up)

What is this?

HILDA

I don't know.

ENID

You don't know? For the daughter of Wendel Bane you certainly are stupid.

> (NIMMY moves menacingly toward ENID. ENID surprisingly finds his knife in his holster and NIMMY backs off.)

LEO

(reads)

Pit -- obvious phoney. Eddie and Ralph -- butchers! What does this mean?

ENID

(reading over Leo's shoulder)
"Juper -- dressed to kill". Your highness, she is screening possible assassins and taking notes on them. Apparently it's between Eddie, Juper and Ralph to see who kills you.

MARTHA

(reading)

My god. She's going to drink our ashes!

HILDA

I've never seen those papers in my life. They were planted on me.

> (ERNIE re-enters from up stage left, looking around like he is lost.)

NIMMY

Hilda wouldn't harm you, father.

 $_{
m LEO}$

Did you take care of him, Ernie?

ERNIE

I tied him up good.

LEO

Well done. Now take her to your chambers and lock her up.

NIMMY

Father!

ERNIE

Do you want me to hold on to the bottle, too?

LEO

Of course not. This is priceless. I wouldn't dare let your filthy hands touch it.

ERNIE

Oh. (He grabs HILDA) Come Hilda.

NIMMY

Leave her alone!

ERNIE

King said I could.

NIMMY

I won't let you do this.

(ENID and GUARD hold NIMMY back. ERNIE exits up stage left.)

LEO

Enid, I think it's time for the Prince to have his rest.

ENID

Yes, your majesty.

MARTHA

Nimmy, that girl is the daughter of a magician. She can't be trusted.

LEO

You're right, of course, dear. But there is something else afoot here. I believe Nimmy is still under some kind of spell. A spell that we were all under, put on us by Wendel, perhaps with the help of that vixen. Enid, guard -- escort the prince to his chambers. And make sure . . .

NIMMY

I won't have that slob touch me . . . but I'll have this!

(He pulls the bottle away from LEO and exits through archway stage right.)

LEO

My elixir! After him!

(ENID and GUARD chase NIMMY and immediately get lost.)

That boy has crossed me for the last time.

MARTHA

You won't harm him?

LEO

Of course not. But I can't have Leoland without my elixir . . . and he must learn to obey his father.

(During this short dialogue there has been a ruckus backstage because ENID and GUARD keep bumping into each other because they are lost. Finally they re-enter through archway.)

ENID

Your majesty, something is wrong. The castle is changed. Walls where there were none. And nothing where walls used to be. Ropes hanging, colored candles.

LEO

You lost him then.

ENID

Yes. Perhaps I'm still under Wendel's spell.

GUARD

You know, Lord Enid, I may be under a spell, too. I could have sworn I put my hand through that wall.

(He points to audience.)

ENID

When we want your observations, we'll ask for them -- and we'll never ask! Now keep searching.

(GUARD exits.)

LEO

He can't hide forever.

MARTHA

What shall we do for him when we get him? How do you unbreak a spell?

ENID

(at caldron)

This might be a good place for him, your majesty. For Wendel and Hilda as well.

(LEO and MARTHA walk over and

look in.)

MARTHA

Ah!

LEO

Wendel's fish.

MARTHA

You wouldn't dare put Nimmy in there.

LEO

Oh no, no. Enid is joking. Aren't you, Enid?

ENID

Yes.

MARTHA

Why don't you kill that thing?

LEO

At one time I wanted to, but I think now I'll wait. A king shouldn't be rash, should he?

ENID

No, sire.

LEO

Anyway, it's just a fish.

(GUARD enters through archway with a rack of 15th century

costumes.)

GUARD

Look what I found.

(THEY look through costumes. ENID and LEO throw a few on the ground.)

LEO

Hmmm. Wendel's disguises.

(He takes crown.)

It looks like he had ideas of imitating a king.

ENID

(pulls gown out)

Yes, and a queen, too.

MARTHA

It's lovely.

LEO

It's yours, my dear. Wendel won't need it.

(GUARD pulls back some costumes and exposes PIT, who is hanging from a rack hook -- dead.)

MARTHA

It's Wendel!

GUARD

He's dead.

ENID

It seems Ernie got carried away.

LEO

Remind me to reprimand him for this.

ENID

Of course.

(They snicker then cover the body.

MORT and ATTIE come in through lobby door. They could be discussing how they couldn't get hold of owner.)

MARTHA

But Leo, how will we break the spell of this castle with Wendel dead?

LEO

Hilda can tell us what we need to know. Ernie! Ernie!

(ERNIE enters with sleeve of Hilda's dress.)

ERNIE

Yeah?

LEO

Bring back Hilda.

ERNIE

Right now?

LEO

Yes.

ERNIE

Does it matter how she is dressed?

(Before Leo can answer MORT and ATTIE come on stage.)

GUARD

Look! Through the wall!

LEO

Ah! Protect your king . . . and queen.

ATTIE

Excuse us. We don't mean to barge in like this. I'm sorry ladies and gentlemen, but we had a complaint that someone was attacked and knocked unconscious. Is that right?

(Pause.)

MORT

Who's in charge here? Where's Dr. Pit?

LEO

(to Enid)

Did you see them walk through the wall?

ENID

Wendel's spell.

LEO

Yes, that's it. Who are you?

MORT

(at well)

A goddamn fish. Can you believe that? (Owner's name) couldn't have authorized this?

LEO

I said, who are you?

ATTIE

I'm Officer Fielding. This is Officer Slatt. Who's in charge here?

LEO

I am.

ATTIE

Good. Could you tell us if anyone has been injured? Again, we're sorry to break in on the show, but we have to follow up on complaints.

LEO

What show are you talking about?

ATTIE

This show.

MORT

We'd like to get this over as fast as possible. So if you would cooperate?

(to audience)

Would everyone please stay seated? We may need statements from you.

ATTIE

We won't need any statements from the audience.

MORT

We might. We should keep every option open 'til we get this cleared up.

ATTIE

O.K.

LEO

Who the devil are you talking about?

MORT

The audience.

LEO

Audience?

GUARD

Wall spirits, sire.

ATTIE

Now, what is your name?

LEO

You know very well what my name is.

ATTIE

No, I don't. Look, I'm sorry for the inconvenience.

(MORT takes ATTIE aside.)

MORT

These guys are a little queer, aren't they?

ATTIE

Yeah.

MORT

You get their statements. I'll check around.

ATTIE

Good idea.

ENID

Sire, they could be Eddie and Ralph. The ones Hilda hired to kill you. They are armed to the teeth.

 ${ t LEO}$

On my command chain them to the wall.

ATTIE

(takes out notebook)

O.K. Everyone step over here. I'd like to get some information.

(MORT comes across PIT in rack.)

MORT

Ho! We got a dead one, Attie.

(They start to draw their guns.)

ATTIE

All right. Let's get everyone on stage.

LEO

Now!

(ERNIE collars MORT and ATTIE. ENID and GUARD take their pistols then chain them to the wall.)

ATTIE

Hey! Give those back. Those are official (name of theatre) Security Stun Guns. They are dangerous in unskilled hands.

LEO

Stand still and be quiet.

MORT

This ain't no game! This is ten to twenty years you're looking at.

LEO

Gag them.

(ENID and GUARD gag them using cloth from the rack. LEO takes the pistols.)

LEO

Interesting weapons. Hand cannons.

(LEO shoots pistol.)

Ha, Ha. With these and the elixir nothing can stand in the way of overthrowing Edward.

ENID

We must dispose of Wendel's body.

LEO

Yes. Ernie, why don't you give our fish friend some dinner?

(LEO and ENID laugh. ERNIE laughs, too, then asks the next line.)

ERNIE

What do you mean?

LEO

Throw Wendel down the well.

ERNIE

Oh.

(ERNIE picks up PIT and throws him down the well.)

LEO

Now my friends, tell me where Nimmy is hiding?

(LEO nods to GUARD to take out MORT'S gag.)

MORT

Up your wazoo and around the corner for all I know and care. You . . .

(LEO nods to have GUARD gag MORT)

LEO

If you tell me, your lives will be spared. If not you'll be swimming with Wendel.

(LEO nods to have GUARD take out ATTIE'S gag.)

ATTIE

Thank you. I would just like to say one thing. (to audience)

These guys are nuts! Help! Help!

(LEO nods to GUARD to gag ATTIE.)

LEO

A few days shackled, without bread and water may change your minds.

ENTD

Sire, should we now dispose of Hilda?

LEO

Not yet. We may need her for bait to capture Nimmy.

(skeptically looks at ENID and
GUARD)

I suppose I will have to lead the search for him?

GUARD

I'm sure you'll do better than Enid, your highness.

LEO

Ernie, stay here and watch Hilda. Keep your eyes peeled for Nimmy. And clean this place up.

ERNIE

Clean it up. O.K.

MARTHA

Guard, bring those clothes.

(LEO, MARTHA, ENID and guard exit upper left archway with clothing rack. ERNIE picks up a jailer costume and a dress from the floor. He picks up a piece of lint and throws it down the well. He sees the loose wire and throws it down

the well. Sparks fly from the well. PIT screams. The lights flicker. ERNIE ducks down cringing and exits stage left.)

LEO

(off stage)

What was that.

ENID

(off stage)

You see sire, it's not at all like it should be.

(PIT climbs up out of well. His hair is frazzled.)

PIT

Wow.

(He crawls to center stage.)

Let's see. I came to (town being played). I remember that.

I set up the show. You're the audience, right? I get

beaten to death Then I get drug out of the water

and given CPR by a fish Did someone call the cops?

(MORT and ATTIE mumble. PIT sees

them.)

Oh boy.

(PIT goes and takes out gags.)

MORT

You're Dr. Pit, right?

PIT

I hope so.

ATTIE

Those other guys called you Wendel.

PIT

That's right! The elixir works!

MORT

Appreciate you letting us down.

PIT

Oh. The keys are backstage with Denise Denise!

(PIT runs to off stage left.)

(Offstage)

Denise, are you hurt?

DENISE

(Offstage)

Yes. I am hurt.

PIT

(Offstage)

Stay here. I'll get the security cops down.

(NIMMY races in from upper stage right. He is 30 years older. His clothes are tattered. He has a beard and the bottle.)

NIMMY

Wendel? Thank heaven you're alive.

PIT

Ah, Prince Nimmy. You've brought the elixir.

(He takes elixir.)

You look a bit different.

NIMMY

Yes. I am. This elixir has a terrible affect on me. It's making me age at a horrendous rate. Look at me, I'm a middle aged man. And ten minutes ago I was an adolescent.

PIT

Hmm. That is interesting. It's probably your blood condition.

YMMI

The things I've felt and thought!

PIT

I can't believe my elixer would do that.

NIMMY

What should I do?

PIT

A good alchemist would get all the facts, make a diagnosis, come up with a solution, then act on his findings.

NIMMY

I don't have that much time.

(points to his hand)

You see that varicose vein?

No.

NIMMY

That's because the wrinkles are covering it!

PIT

All right, all right. I'll prepare the antidote.

NIMMY

Good.

PIT

And I hope it works.

NIMMY

What's that?

PIT

Nothing.

NIMMY

(points to MORT and ATTIE)

Who are these people?

PIT

Enemies of Leo.

NIMMY

We must set them free.

PIT

Yes. We also need to try the antidote on the others.

NIMMY

Why?

PIT

Well, they're really not who they seem to be.

NIMMY

I don't understand what you mean. Of course, I have a tough time making sense of anything lately.

PIT

I can imagine.

NIMMY

I say something and at the end of my sentence it's two weeks later.

I know people like that Why don't you round up all the other volunteers?

YMMIN

Volunteers?

PIT

Your mom and dad.

NIMMY

They want to kill me . . . and you.

PIT

They won't if they get the antidote.

NIMMY

An antidote won't stop them.

(sees explosive box)

Maybe we could blow them up.

PIT

I don't know.

NIMMY

That's it. Just as they tried to kill you. We'll kill them.

PIT

O.K. O.K. We'll blow them up. Just find them and lure them down here.

MORT

Keys!

PIT

Oh, yes.

(PIT starts off right.)

NIMMY

Wait. There is something else I must tell you, Wendel. I've never . . . it's been 40 years and I've never . . .

PIT

Never what?

NIMMY

I have to think of the kingdom. The royal line must be kept intact.

PIT

Oh! That "never".

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NIMMY

Yes. Can you imagine what it's like to go 40 years and not once let your natural urges be fulfilled?

PTT

Hurts to imagine that one, Nimmy. I'll prepare the antidote as soon as we . . . uh . . . get rid of the king. Then you'll have all the time in the world to fulfill your urges.

NIMMY

I hope you're right.

(HILDA rushes out from archway wearing a new dress. ERNIE follows dressed like a jailer.)

HILDA

Don't you understand "No!"?

ERNIE

Sure I do. That means . . .

(sees PIT and NIMMY)

Hey. You're dead. And you're . . . who are you?

(HILDA runs to PIT)

HILDA

Father. That monster said you were dead.

(whispers knowingly)

We must talk . . . and soon.

(goes to Nimmy)

Nimmy, my prince.

NIMMY

(bubbles over with HILDA so close)

Ah, uh, ahh.

PIT

You might want to give him some room there, Hilda.

ERNIE

The king wants that elixir, and he wants you (points to PIT) dead.

PIT

Kill me?

ERNIE

Yes.

PIT

Then what?

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ERNIE

Then I'll get the elixir; and then I'll chain Hilda where there is hay and dark.

PIT

I see. Hilda and Ernie seem relatively sound, Nimmy. I'm sure it's not the elixir's fault that you are aging. It has to be your blood condition.

NIMMY

(not listening)

You won't touch her.

(NIMMY jumps ERNIE. They fight, rolling on the stage.)

HILDA

Father, you better help Nimmy. We need him.

PIT

Need him? All right.

(PIT hits ERNIE over the head with his book.)

NIMMY

Come, Hilda. We haven't much time.

HILDA

One minute, my precious.

(She goes to PIT and whispers.)
Your plan is working perfectly. But we must dispose of Leo quickly. Only then can Nimmy and I marry.

PIT

That's my plan, eh?

HILDA

Yes. Then we murder Nimmy and you will have the Sutmont Castle.

PIT

Then what?

HILDA

Then what?! Then you will conquer England.

PIT

I'm definitely goal oriented. But listen, Hilda, as wonderful a feeling as controlling a castle must be -- and not having to live in oily hotels -- and as wonderful a

feeling it must be to control thousands of people's lives instead of playing to half houses . . . Maybe I will drink some of Wendel's elixir.

HILDA

Are you all right?

PIT

(snaps back to himself)

Yes. Just daydreaming. Listen we must get everyone down on stage . . . I mean into the dungeon.

NIMMY

Can't that wait! Don't you understand my situation?

HILDA

Why do you want them down there?

PIT

Uh, to blow them up.

HILDA

Wonderful.

PIT

Yes.

NIMMY

Come, Hilda.

HILDA

We'll get them down here, father.

PIT

All right. But I want you two to act honorably.

NIMMY

It's been 50 years. How much more honorable can I get?

(THEY exit through upper left archway. DENISE drags herself on stage.)

PIT

Denise! Are you all right?

DENISE

Pit . . .

(sees audience)

What's the audience still doing here?

I haven't been here to master the ceremonies, as it were.

DENISE

You people don't understand the danger you're in. Everyone leave quickly.

MORT

Hey lady, we'll handle this. Just keep the audience where they are and get us down.

DENISE

(seeing the security guards for the first time)

The security quards? How did you get here?

PIT

(interjecting)

It's a fascinating story, Denise. The elixir works; Nimmy is in love with my daughter, who wants to kill everyone so I can be king . . . only Nimmy is 50 years old now. And, of course, we all hate Ernie . . .

(He gives Ernie a slight kick.

Ernie groans.)

who, by the way, killed me.

DENISE

Yes, he knocked me out, too.

PIT

No, he <u>killed</u> me. I was dead. Then the fish gave me artificial respiration.

DENISE

Yes, Pit. We gotta talk.

PIT

Can we get off the money kick? Nobody has pressed charges over the checks yet. And now that the elixir works we'll have all the money we need to pay our debts.

MORT

What's that?

DENISE

Nothing.

(takes PIT aside)

It's not the money I'm worried about. I want these people to leave now. They are in danger. Not from King Leo or Ernie or any of the volunteers . . . but from you.

Me!

DENISE

I've watched you change these past few months from an amiable medicine show man to a person who resembles an evil sorcerer. A sorcerer who would stop at nothing to complete his horrible experiments. And all because of that elixir.

PIT

That's silly. The elixir hasn't even worked until now.

DENISE

You've drank more than enough to affect you.

PIT

Aah . . .

DENISE

It used to be so fun to spray people with nitrous oxide and watch them giggle.

PIT

That was kid's stuff. Now I have the real thing.

DENISE

But there is a real danger now, too. I'm afraid you will literally become Wendel and try to sacrifice people merely to advance his experiments in alchemy.

PIT

Oh boy, Denise . . .

DENISE

Why else would you bring explosives on stage?

MORT

I thought that was a prop?

PIT

It is. It's harmless. Look.

(PIT pushes down lever. Box lets out loud farting noise.)

See.

DENISE

But it's not far from being extremely dangerous. Right?

PIT

Yeah, just a little more oregano, I think . . . anyway, Wendel wasn't that bad of a guy.

DENISE

Burning up people so he could use their ashes to make potions?!

PIT

(sheepishly)

Maybe that is going a bit far. But he had limited facilities. He had to improvise.

MORT

I hate to break this up, but would you unlock these chains?

PIT

Oh, yes. I'll get the keys.

(PIT exits with alchemy book. DENISE turns to the audience. As she is talking, ERNIE gets up.)

DENISE

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm not sure why the guards want you to stay . . .

MORT

(seeing ERNIE)

Oh god.

DENISE

. . . but I certainly wouldn't hesitate to leave in a calm and orderly way.

(ERNIE grabs her and puts her over

his shoulder)

Hey! What are you doing? Put me down!

ERNIE

(puts her down)

You're not Hilda.

DENISE

That's right! And whoever else you might think I am -- I'm not. So keep your grubby hands off!

(Backstage LEO, MARTHA, ENID and GUARD hear HILDA scream and head toward stage right exit.)

ERNIE

King will want you though.

DENISE

You sure can turn a girl's head.

(She inches toward stage right.)

Why don't you just stay right where you are . . . Pit!!

(DENISE runs off stage right followed by ERNIE. Off stage she runs into PIT rummaging for keys -- just as LEO, MARTHA, ENID and GUARD arrive.)

DENISE

(backstage)

Oh oh.

ENID

(backstage)

You're highness, it's Wendel! He's alive!

LEO

(backstage)

Give me my hand cannon. I'll do this myself.

PIT

No, don't shoot!

(Shots are fired. PIT yells. DENISE screams. PIT staggers on stage with his book. Looking for a place to put it for safe keeping he drops it down the well.)

LEO

Grab the girl . . . there he is!

(Shots ring out and hit PIT. He falls just short of MORT and ATTIE with the keys. DENISE rushes on stage, breaking free from GUARD. She is followed by LEO, MARTHA, ENID and GUARD. They are all dressed in 15th century attire. DENISE jumps off stage and falls momentarily because she hurts her leg.)

MARTHA

She jumped through the wall.

GUARD

Your majesty. I'm sure I put my hand through that wall.

LEO

Nothing is where it should be. Perhaps that wall is an illusion, also. What's on the other side of this wall?

ENID

The stables, your highness.

(LEO takes a bottle of liquid from lab and sluices it toward and through the wall -- trying not to hit anybody in the audience, please.)

LEO

It's corporeal as the air. We've done with Wendel. We better get his henchmen.

(LEO pushes GUARD through wall first, then they follow. DENISE gets up and limps up the aisle.)

GUARD

Ooh! Look at all these wall fairies!

LEO

These aren't wall fairies. These are my subjects.

ENID

Ugly lot.

LEO

(to audience member sitting in stables)

Why are you sitting there?

ENID

Look, your highness! At the garden entrance.

(LEO sees DENISE and fires a shot that just ricochets off lobby door. DENISE ducks down and crawls through seats.)

LEO

I think I wounded her.

(They go toward exit.)

ENID

Wonderful shooting, sire.

(DENISE crawls to other aisle as the others make it to the lobby door. She then makes a dash toward the stage.)

MARTHA

There she goes.

(LEO fires a few shots, then runs out of ammo.)

LEO

Bilgewater!

(to audience member in front row)
You down there. Stop her! Stop her, I say!

(DENISE hops on stage.)

GUARD

She went through the wall, back into the dungeon.

(DENISE drags PIT though upper left archway.)

MORT

The keys! The keys!

(LEO and TROOPS go back to stage procenium. LEO turns to person who didn't stop DENISE.)

LEO

I'll have you horsewhipped for this.

(LEO hits his knee on procenium trying to get on stage then turns defiantly toward audience anticipating snickers. He then climbs through wall. The others follow.)

MARTHA

This wall scares me, Leo.

LEO

Yes. It is strange. But perhaps it's not a wall. Perhaps because of the spell we are perceiving incorrectly.

GUARD

She's taken Wendel.

ENID

But he can't harm us now. He's dead.

LEO

That's what I thought before.

(LEO glares at ERNIE.)

But more important than Wendel is his book.

MARTHA

His book?

LEO

His book of alchemy. If we can find that and regain the elixir, I'm sure we can remedy the confusions of this castle.

ENID

Hilda would know.

LEO

Yes, it's time we talked with Hilda. Ernie bring her here.

ERNIE

Ooh.

LEO

Quickly.

ERNIE

I'm pretty sure Hilda got away.

LEO

Whatl

ERNIE

This old guy and Wendel ganged up on me . . . uh . . . they tricked me.

LEO

You must find her, Ernie.

ERNIE

All right.

LEO

If you don't, Ernie, there won't be enough of you to chain to the wall.

ERNIE

O.K. I'll get right on that your kingness.

(ERNIE exits stage left.)

MARTHA

There may be enough potions here to help us.

LEO

Hmm.

MORT

Hey king, we'll be glad to help you if you get us down.

LEO

You! How did you get rid of your gag?

MORT

Dr. Pit took 'em out.

ATTIE

He means Wendel.

MORT

Yeah, I mean Wendel.

LEO

Where is Nimmy?

мовт

Let's see, Nimmy's an older guy, 50, beard?

LEO

No. Prince Nimmy is barely out of his pubescence.

ATTIE

Yeah, that's the one.

LEO

I can see you will be extremely helpful.

MORT

We saw where the stage manager took Dr. Pit?

ENID

Pit? Why do they keep calling him "Pit"?

ATTIE

He means Wendel.

MORT

Yeah, I mean Wendel.

LEO

Where?

MORT

Through that archway.

LEO

Ah. That way leads nowhere. They'll be as lost as we are. (to MARTHA)

Darling, I think you were right when you said there may be enough here to help us. We'll take these with us. If we can find my quarters we may be able to make the elixir with my own stock of beverages. Gather those bottles, guard.

(GUARD gathers an armful of bottles. They start off through up right archway.)

MORT

Hey! What about us?

LEO

Oh yes. Guard, gag them.

(Awkwardly GUARD gags MORT and ATTIE as they leave. MORT and ATTIE try to reach keys with their feet but can't reach them. NIMMY enters from upper left archway. He is old and bent. His hair and beard are long and gray. He sees MORT and ATTIE. They mumble at him.)

NIMMY

Hi, fellows. How you doing? You wouldn't happen to know where any antidote is, would ya? I remember it's around here someplace. Boy, you guys have been around quite a while?

(MORT and ATTIE mumble.)

Naw, sorry. Don't have time to chat. I got to make myself an antidote. Except I don't know where to start . . . Hilda, get in here.

(HILDA enters. She is in a well advanced stage of pregnancy and is growing right before our eyes.)

YMMIN

Get over here. We gotta make an antidote.

HILDA

I'd like to know what's happened to me.

NIMMY

Well, from the looks of it, you're pregnant.

HILDA

I know I'm pregnant! How did it happen?

NIMMY

Well, a man and a woman get together and . . .

HILDA

But how could it have happened to me?

NIMMY

Ah. That's been the sad song of many a young maiden, Hilda, my dear.

HILDA

I want to be queen, not a mother.

YMMI

You're a queen to me, sweetheart.

HILDA

But I haven't done anything to deserve this?

NIMMY

You haven't? What about our little foray?

HILDA

That?! In the hall? That was minutes ago and it took no longer than a mosquito bite.

NIMMY

Well, thank you, very much.

HILDA

Why am I so big now?

NIMMY

I don't know. It wasn't explained quite this way to me Wait a minute. It must be my blood disorder.

(HILDA groans and grows.)

NIMMY

That's it! I've passed my blood on to a little Sutmont.

(NIMMY pats Hilda's stomach.)

HILDA

Isn't there supposed to be some kind of romance involved?

NIMMY

I didn't have time to order a garland of daisies, if that's what you mean.

(HILDA groans and grows.)

Let me see if I can feel him.

(He listens to her stomach and the baby kicks him across the stage.)

Seems healthy.

HILDA

Oh my god. It's time . . . hopefully this will be as quick at the end as it was at the beginning.

(HILDA goes toward upper left archway. NIMMY hesitates, wanting to make antidote.)

I need your help.

(NIMMY reluctantly goes with HILDA. MORT and ATTIE mumble for help.)

NIMMY

(misunderstanding)

Thanks. I'll need it.

(He exits. MORT and ATTIE try to get keys by using their feet but in the process get hopelessly entangled with one another. Off stage we hear HILDA yell, then a loud baby's cry. ERNIE enters through stage left entrance. He has flowers in one hand and he has a whip hanging from his belt. ERNIE is looking for HILDA. He sees the keys and picks them up. He sees MORT and ATTIE entangled.)

ERNIE

Excuse me.

(He exits through archway stage right.

NIMMY enters archway stage left. He is much older, bent, his hair is white.)

NIMMY

Where in the hell am I going to get goat's milk?

(He sees MORT and ATTIE entangled.

They yell at him.)

Ah, no need to make any excuses, fellas. I understand completely. After 30 or 40 years it gets mighty lonesome. Dang, I forgot what I was after.

(MORT and ATTIE untangle. DENISE calls NIMMY from stage right.)

DENISE

Psst!

NIMMY

Yeah?

DENISE

Come here.

(NIMMY goes to her.)

Are you Nimmy?

NIMMY

Yeah.

DENISE

The potion has made you age faster.

NIMMY

You just spent a year of my life telling me something I already know.

DENISE

If the antidote works it should reverse all the processes that are happening inside you. All you need is some antidote . . . that works.

NIMMY

Good.

DENISE

Here. I need your help now.

(NIMMY and DENISE exit stage right. They both wheel PIT on. He is unconscious, standing up on a loading dolly. They set him by the well. DENISE goes to MORT and ATTIE and takes their gags out.)

DENISE

Where are the keys?

ATTIE

Ernie has them.

DENISE

Oh . . . Dr. Pitt is alive, but his pulse is weak.

MORT

He should be. He only got hit by rubber bullets.

DENISE

Rubber bullets!

ATTIE

Yeah. Have you ever heard of stun guns?

DENISE

Yes.

MORT

That's the only thing they let us use around here. Mickey Mouse outfit.

ATTIE

Of course, if you got hit in the head with one of those bullets you could be knocked unconscious for . . . well . . . for life.

DENISE

He needs a restorative. If only I had his alchemy book.

NIMMY

(by caldron)

There's a book down there. By that fish.

DENISE

There is!

NIMMY

It's by that fish, on the ledge.

DENISE

(at well)

That's it.

NIMMY

Is that a fish?

DENISE

Yes.

YMMIN

Big teeth. You see that? He's got big teeth, there.

DENISE

Yes.

NIMMY

You got any other ideas?

DENISE

We have to get that book.

NIMMY

Besides that one, I mean!

ATTIE

If that man is unconscious he should receive medical attention immediately.

DENISE

You're right. And Nimmy, you need help, too. Come on, we'll go to the hospital.

NIMMY

We'll forget the fish, then?

DENISE

Yes, yes. Come on.

NIMMY

Good.

(DENISE rolls PIT off stage, up the aisle toward lobby. NIMMY stops at wall.)

NIMMY

Whoa! I lost her. Right at the wall here. She disappeared. Poof!

(HILDA enter upper left.)

HILDA

Nimmy, over here.

NIMMY

Ah, my woman. How are you doing, sweetheart?

HILDA

Remember that goat's milk I sent you after?

NIMMY (not really)

Sure.

HILDA

You better make it roast mutton and potato.

NIMMY

Why?

HILDA

Nimmy Jr. weaned quickly.

NIMMY

Nimmy Jr.?

HILDA

Your son.

NIMMY

My boy. Where is he?

(HILDA brings on a 10-year old boy resembling NIMMY, dressed in clothes too big for him.)

HILDA

I figure he'll grow into these.

NIMMY

Nimmy Jr. How you doing, fella?

NIMMY JR.

You my dad?

NIMMY

You bet.

NIMMY JR.

Nice to meet you.

(NIMMY gives him a hug.)

NIMMY

Nice to meet you, son. Takes after me, don't you think?

(Meanwhile DENISE has stopped with PIT in the aisle. She leaves him parked by or in a vacant seat and rushes back on stage.)

YMMIN

Oh, hi. Hilda, this is . . . uh . . . who are you?

DENISE

Hilda, I'm Denise, Dr. Pit's . . . er . . . Wendel's . . . your father's assistant.

HILDA

Yes. You tried to save my father?

DENISE

I've got to get Who is this?

NIMMY

This is my boy!

DENISE

Oh. Well, I've got to get Nimmy medical assistance.

PIT

(wakes up screaming)

No! Don't shoot!

(He wakes up and looks around him and sees he is in an audience, but is not sure who he is yet. He says next line to audience member next to him.)

Pardon me.

DENISE

Dr. Pit.

(DENISE rushes off stage toward PIT.)

HILDA

Strange she should run off like that.

YMMIV

Strange she should do it through a wall.

HILDA

I don't like this, Nimmy.

YMMIN

I don't either. Let's find some mutton.

(THEY exit through upper left archway.)

DENISE

(seeing them leave)

No. Wait. Oh . . .

(She goes to PIT. PIT still does not know who he is. He tries to hide his embarrassment by applauding.)

PIT

Wonderful show! Wonderful.

DENISE

Dr. Pit?!

PIT

Glad to meet you, Dr. Pit.

DENISE

No, you're Dr. Pit.

PIT

Oh. Oh! I'm Pit. And you're . . .

DENISE

Your wife.

PIT

Denise! That's right.

DENISE

Come on. We have to prepare the antidote.

(They go on stage.)

PIT

Right, the antidote. Well, no need for that. It's all set.

DENISE

Good.

PIT

The only thing is, it might not work.

DENISE

Why not?

PIT

The elixir itself didn't work until tonight. Why should the antidote?

DENISE

We have to give it a try. It may be the only thing that can save Nimmy's life and bring back the others to a sane world.

PIT

(He is looking longingly at Wendel's flask.)

Uh huh.

DENISE

I think if the antidote works it will reverse all the processes that occurred. So hopefully Nimmy will become young Pete again. What do you think? . . . Pit?

PIT

Yeah.

DENISE

What are you looking at?

PIT

I was wondering -- just wondering, you understand -- what it would be like to be Wendel.

DENISE

Don't even think about it.

PIT

To be in touch with the spiritual powers of the universe. Just for a couple of minutes.

DENISE

No.

PIT

Then you can give me the antidote.

DENISE

But you said it might not work.

 \mathtt{PIT}

I did say that, didn't I? O.K. We'll . . . uh . . . forget it then.

DENISE

Nevertheless, we must find a way to get all our volunteers to take it. Why not offer Leo your hand in friendship? Yes, we'll convince him that with you as his ally his province will be secure. Yeah, that's a good one Pit?

PIT

My mind's a little muddled. Maybe Wendel could think clearer.

(PIT goes for Wendel's flask.)

DENISE

No, Doctor.

(Through the lobby door bursts the GUARD blowing a bugle.)

GUARD

(drunk)

His royal kingness and her majestiness, Martha and Leo . . .

(Enter LEO, MARTHA and ENID. All are drunk and carrying booze bottles.)

LEO

Let the festival begin!

(goes to audience member) Don't be frightened. It's time you met your king.

DENISE

There they are.

MARTHA

We need music.

LEO

(to audience member)

Yes, music. Strike up a song.

(They begin to dance. GUARD takes ENID to dance. ENID starts to dance then pushes him away. LEO stops at woman in stable.)

LEO

You don't have to sit there if you don't want to.

ENID

Your highness, perhaps we shouldn't have broken into (Theater President's name)'s liquor cabinet?

LEO

Nonsense. This is my castle. And these are my people. Everyone here should have a bottle. Guard!

ENID

(nods at Denise)

Your highness. Through the wall.

(DENISE has come off stage and approaches LEO in the aisle. During this time PIT submits to the temptation and pours the elixir into Wendel's flask and then drinks the potion in front of MORT and ATTIE. He places the flask on the well. He reacts violently to the potion and comes out of his convulsions a crooked, evil man. DENISE does not see this.)

DENISE

(back to stage)

Your highness, a thousand pardons for interrupting your, uh, shindig, here. But I come to offer Wendel's hand in friendship. Wendel has decided you two should become allies. And he will help you in anyway he can.

MARTHA

Wendel's not dead, then?

DENISE

No, your majesty . . . Martha. But he sees the futility of going against your will.

LEO

I certainly underestimated him. He has come back from the dead three times. What do you think, Enid?

ENTD

I would't trust Wendel, but perhaps there's merit in an alliance.

LEO

Yes, we can at least keep an eye on him if he is on our side.

(to DENISE)

Perhaps a reconciliation is in order. Lead the way.

(DENISE starts on stage)

Wait. Are you going through that wall?

DENISE

Oh yeah. It's O.K. Wendel made this wall, especially for you.

LEO

(to MARTHA)

So he could catch us in it. Be careful.

(Meanwhile PIT has gagged the cops because they tried to tell him not to take any more elixir. When DENISE and the volunteers come through the wall PIT jumps back in wonder because all he can see is a wall. PIT, no WENDEL, recognizes everyone except Denise.)

DENISE

Wendel. Here is his majesty, whom you are going to offer your undying allegiance and friendship.

PIT

(ignoring DENISE)

Leo. I see you walk through walls now. You have attained a great deal of power without me.

DENISE

Yes, but you can offer him more, can't you Wendel?

PIT

Who are you?!

DENISE

Uh, no one. Excuse me.

(During dialogue, DENISE picks up Wendel's bottle and suspects the worst. She looks at MORT and ATTIE who nod their heads. She sets flask on the caldron. She then goes and pours the antidote into flasks.)

LEO

Is it true you plan to come back into my fold and help me conquer England?

PIT

(sneakily)

Yes, of course it is, Leo. I'm sure any grievances we've had can be mended.

ENID

What assurance can we have that you will not cast a spell on the future king?

PIT

What assurance do I have that you will not blow me up at my kiln?

(ENID bites his lip and scowls at PIT.)

DENISE

(pouring antidote)

Now, now, that's all behind us. Why don't we shake hands and have a toast, to seal our commitment to a better . . . England.

PIT

Who is this person?

LEO

She's your assistant.

PIT

I've never seen her before in my life.

(Enter ERNIE pulling HILDA who has flowers that ERNIE gave her. She throws them on the stage.)

ERNIE

I got her, king.

LEO

Oh, good, Ernie.

PIT

Hilda.

HILDA

Hello, father.

PIT

What are these bindings for?

LEO

You may untie her, Ernie.

ERNIE

Oh . . .

(He doesn't untie her.)

LEO

(to PIT)

Well, before our alliance, I couldn't be too careful, now could I?

PIT

(almost a sneer)

Yes.

LEO

Untie her! (ERNIE unties her.) But, now Wendel, I see my ambitions cannot be achieved without your help. You are a man of great vision and power.

HILDA

You are also a grandfather.

PIT

What?

ERNIE

Oh, yeah. I got two more back here. You want 'em?

LEO

Yes, bring them in.

(ERNIE goes through archway upper stage left and brings young NIMMY JR. out, who is now played by NIMMY/PETE as he originally was at the first of play. He is dragging NIMMY SR. who is played by another actor. NIMMY SR. is so old he is past being on his last legs. He is set next to the explosive box.)

MARTHA

(goes to NIMMY JR.)

NIMMY, my son! You look . . . different.

HILDA

He's not your son, he's my son. Your son is over there against the wall.

(NIMMY SR. feebly raises his hand to waive.)

MARTHA

Don't be ridiculous.

DENISE

So! Isn't this great. We're all back together. A big happy family. Let's have a toast to King Leo and Wendel Bane, the two best guys this side of Stonehedge. Everybody drink.

LEO

This peasant has a certain charm to her. Yes, let's have a toast to solidify a long and trusted friendship.

(DENISE gives them drinks from flasks she filled with antidote. They all drink.

DENISE gives NIMMY SR. his drink. But the antidote doesn't work. LEO throws his flask down the well, as if it were a fire place, then laughs. ENID and GUARD do the same. PIT walks over to well and looks in.)

PIT

I don't think my fish will like that. He's very fussy about what is thrown at him.

(LEO and PIT stare coldly at each other.

During the following short dialogue ENID and GUARD drop Wendel's flask down the well on purpose.)

DENISE

(to LEO)

So I guess after the show we could get together and talk about wheat prices, eh . . . Mr. Peterson?

(LEO and PIT stare at her.)

Maybe not, we'll have to strike the set, eh, Dr. . . . Wendel.

PIT

(to DENISE)

You're beginning to irritate me. I don't know who you are, but I suspect your actions are not in my best interest.

DENISE

(to herself)

It's not working.

LEO

She's only a peasant. They all are a bit strange.

(GUARD and ENID jump back from well.)

GUARD

Whoa! Your highness, the fish is climbing up the well.

(They rush to well.)

LEO

Good lord. Shake it loose.

(ENID and GUARD shake cord and FISH falls into water. Water splashes up out of well all over actors and stage, including explosives box.)

MARTHA

Ack! There's water everywhere.

LEO

Pull the rope up.

DENISE

That's not a rope. That's a live wire.

(They pay no attention to her as the wire is pulled up. It touches the water on the stage and sparks fly, lights flicker and black out. Screams. explosive box right next to NIMMY SR. explodes. Lights come up. DENISE secures the wire. Everyone gets up, wobbly. They are now who they originally were at the beginning of the play -- because the antidote and the missing ingredient, electricity, has transformed them back. All except for NIMMY SR., who is now a pile of ashes with his clothes on top. NIMMY JR. is a bit in limbo now. His original state is a blurred vision of 600 years ago.)

PIT

(groggily to DENISE)

Get the antidote ready. And so King Leo, if we could become friends maybe . . .

HANK/LEO

What the hell you talking about? And what in the hell do I have these stupid clothes on for? Alice are you O.K.?

ALICE/MARTHA

Yes.

HANK

We didn't do anything silly, did we?

BOB/ERNIE

Dr. Pit. Could you enlighten me as to why I'm carrying this whip and these keys?

PIT

Maybe.

(to DENISE)

Could I?

DENISE

If you're Dr. Pit, you could.

(She takes keys and gets guns from ENID/EDDIE and GUARD/

RALPH.)

PIT

All right, I can explain it.

(DENISE gives PIT keys.)

ELOISE/HILDA

(to Bob)

Yes, and maybe you could explain why you had your hand on my thigh.

BOB

I did? I'm terribly sorry.

DENISE

Excellent questions. And we'll answer all of them as soon as we all get back stage.

(to PIT)

They've taken the antidote and the electricity made it work.

PIT

Oh.

ALICE

What is this?

(Everyone looks. There is a pile of ashes and Nimmy's clothes. DENISE scoops up a flaskful and walks toward PIT.)

DENISE

Doctor . . . Uh . . . This is . . . Nimmy.

PIT

Nimmy?

DENISE

Nimmy.

PIT

Oh.

ALICE

What do you mean?

PETE/NIMMY

I thought I was Nimmy the Second.

HANK

Naw, Pete. You're Pete. For crying out loud, what's happening here?

ELOISE

Where's my notebook?

RALPH/GUARD

We're ready to get going anytime you want, doc.

ALICE

If my son is harmed in any way you will be prosecuted to the furthest extent of the law.

PIT

(thinking fast)

No, no, no. He's fine.

(takes DENISE aside with flask of

NIMMY'S ashes.)

If this is Nimmy. Who's that?

(He points to NIMMY JR.)

DENISE

That's Nimmy's kid.

PIT

His kid?

DENISE

Yes. He and Hilda.

PIT

Oh boy. The blood disorder, I suppose?

DENISE

That's what I'm thinking.

HANK

Listen here, Doc. I'm tired of you two jawing without letting any of us in on it. My son don't know his own father . . . and his hair looks different.

ALICE

Yes, and his eyes are a different color.

PIT

He'll be fine. He just didn't get the antidote yet . . . Antidote!!

(takes DENISE out of earshot,

points to NIMMY'S flask)

Did the old Nimmy take the antidote before he blew up?

DENISE

Yes.

PIT

Did he revert back to the original Pete before he became, uh, freezed dried?

DENISE

I don't know.

(Pause.)

PIT

We might as well find out.

DENISE

What are you going to do?

PIT

(to volunteers)

I just needed to get my measurements right so Pete can get the correct dosage of antidote.

(PIT grabs ashes from DENISE and then takes the blue elixir from the lab and pours the elixir into the flask.)

ELOISE

That doesn't say "antidote". That's the elixir, like you gave us.

PIT

Oh, we don't worry about labels around here.

BOB

Why did you pour those ashes in there? It's like you were mixing the potion.

PIT

Not ashes. Herbs. Spices. Nimmy Herbs they're called. Adds flavor. Here we go. Have a drink, son.

NIMMY JR.

(to HILDA/ELOISE)

Is it all right, you think, mother?

ALICE/MARTHA

(on the other side of him)

We hope so, son.

(NIMMY JR. does a double-take.)

PIT

Bottoms up.

(NIMMY JR. drinks the elixir.)

PIT

Ah. We might need one more ingredient.

(PIT grabs wire and gives NIMMY JR. a shock. NIMMY JR. does a few gyrations, then becomes PETE.)

PETE

. . . I sure think what you have to say is interesting, Doc, and it's always best to keep an open mind. But from what I read Wendel was nothing more than a two bit huckster.

PIT

Yes. Yes! He was! That's exactly right. You're so perceptive, Pete. Pete, right?

PETE

Yeah, I'm Pete and this is my ma and dad, Alice and Hank Henderson.

HANK

He knows who the hell I am.

ALICE

It's good to see you back, Pete. You were acting a little goofy there for a second.

PETE

Really?

ALICE

His eyes are still blue.

DENISE

Why don't we all go back stage and have some milk and cookies and relax a little.

(They all agree and start to exit back stage following DENISE.)

BOB

I'd like to know what exactly happened here.

ELOISE

I'm not sure I do.

PETE

Do you have any goat's milk?

EDDIE

(seeing MORT and ATTIE)

Who are these guys?

PIT

Props.

(They exit. PIT unlocks chains and lets MORT and ATTIE down. They take gags out.)

MORT

O.K. Let's see what we got here. I think we got enough to let you run this show at least 20 or 30 years at the state pen!

(takes pen and pad out)

First off -- well, what's first?

ATTIE

Digging a hole.

MORT

Right. You got an unauthorized hole here.

PIT

I certainly will pay for any damages done to the stage.

MORT

You can bet your bathrobe on that one, buddy.

ATTIE

Stole (the President's name) liquor.

MORT

(writes)

Liquor stealing.

PIT

I didn't steal anything.

MORT

But you were the cause of it. Making them people drink illegal magical stuff.

ATTIE

Dealing drugs.

MORT

That's it. Dealing drugs.

PIT

Every ingredient in the elixir and antidote are legal chemicals or foodstuffs, approved by the FDA.

MORT

Hmm. All right. What about that one guy that tried to kill you. Then that Leo character shot you and shot at your wife?!

ATTIE

That was King Leo.

MORT

(stops writing)

Yeah.

ATTIE

King Leo of England.

80

MORT

Yeah.

ATTIE

He stole our guns, too.

MORT

What are you getting at?

ATTIE

The king of England stole our guns, ran around the theater shooting them, while we were chained to the wall and all these people sat and watched.

PIT

I'm sure Denise would not press charges. I certainly won't.

MORT

(frustrated, tears out page)

All right! How about this guy that got blown up, then got new life because some other guy, who was his son and was born 15 minutes ago drank his ashes? What's that?

ATTIE

Reincarnation without a license?

(DENISE enters.)

PIT

I was just thinking. I'll bet (Theater President's name) wouldn't care if a few of his patrons borrowed some of his liquor.

DENISE

Good for public relations.

PIT

Sort of like an open house.

MORT

(sticks pad in pocket)

We got a hole in this stage and I'm reporting it. As for the rest of this fiasco (turns to audience) if anyone says a word about us being chained to the wall we'll deny every word of it.

ATTIE

Or we'll charge you with aiding and abetting . . . uh . . . 15th century revolution.

MORT

Yeah. So clam up. Got it? Come on.

(They exit through aisle to lobby, discussing what they should put in their report.)

DENISE

Pit, the volunteers want to talk with you about the \$5000.

PIT

(puts elixir in lab)

Oh, yes. Well, once this elixir is patented, I'll be able to pay them twice that. All I need is this bottle of elixir and Wendel's alchemy book. Where did I put it?

DENISE

It's in the well.

PIT

(goes to well)

Oh, right. Well, that's as safe as any place for now. (turns to DENISE)

One thing I gotta know.

DENISE

What?

PIT

I was Wendel, right?

DENISE

Yeah.

PIT

What was I like?

DENISE

You were a jerk.

PTT

But I mean, what great insights did I have into the universe, into mankind?

DENISE

None. You were a greedy, vicious lout.

PIT

That must have been a facade. You must not have perceived my inner essence.

DENISE

Wendel's spiritual essence was on the same level as fungus.

PIT (disappointed)

Oh.

DENISE

Just say good night to the audience.

(She turns to audience)

Thank you. You've been a wonderful audience. You've been more than an audience, actually.

PIT

Yes, thank you.

(to DENISE as they walk off) But maybe I could change the chemical make up a bit.

DENISE

(as they both exit)

I'll get the lights.

(Lights go down on stage.
Lights go up in well. A slimy figure hops out with book and goes and grabs elixir from lab and gives an evil giggle. He goes toward wall, feels through it to make sure he can pass through, then he jumps off stage and slimes his way up aisle through the lobby door.

Lights up.)

THE END

THE BALLOONMAN'S CHAIR A One Act Comedy

by

James J. Walker

CAST OF CHARACTERS

BALLOONMAN a simple, slightly retarded man, who is happy and enjoy selling balloons, yo-yos, and pretzels.
CLINTON a proper looking gentleman
TERRANCE a blue-collar worker
These next characters may or may not be put in the program, according to the director's discretion.
LADY IN THE AUDIENCE
MAN IN THE AUDIENCE
MARTHA (MAN IN AUDIENCE'S WIFE)
DIRECTOR
TWO STAGEHANDS
THREE SWAT MEMBERS
MA
JOSIE
Place: A local city park Time: The present

THE BALLOONMAN'S CHAIR

(Scene - A city park.

Enter BALLOONMAN from the audience with a chair. He is ladened with balloons, yo-yos, and pretzels. He sets the chair center stage.)

BALLOONMAN

Balloons! Yo-yos! Pretzels!

(LADY IN AUDIENCE raises her hand.)

LADY

I'd like a balloon.

BALLOONMAN

Twenty-five cents, ma'm.

(LADY gives him a quarter. He gives her a balloon. They exchange "thank yous".

The BALLOONMAN goes to the chair and sits. He takes out a balloon to replace the one he just sold. He blows it up and ties it quickly. He realizes, however, that he has forgotten any string, so he takes a yo-yo and cuts the string with some scissors and uses it to tie the balloon. After he is through he gets up to leave. He looks at the yo-yo then sets it on the chair and walks stage left.

BALLOONMAN

Balloons! Yo-yos! Pretzels!

(Exit BALLOONMAN stage left.

Enter CLINTON stage right and TERRANCE stage left. Both are unconscious of each other. CLINTON is a very

proper man, but he is now in an unhappy, lovesick haze. While TERRANCE, a member of the lower middle class, is feeling rather good.

TERRANCE moves toward the chair and sits, but stands after sitting on the yo-yo. He picks it up and looks it over. CLINTON, who is unconscious of this, meanders toward the chair and sits - deep in thought. TERRANCE does a take, then slowly walks up to CLINTON.)

TERRANCE

Excuse me, that is my chair.

CLINTON

Sorry.

(CLINTON does not move.)

PERRANCE

Yes, well, you see I need this chair.

CLINTON

Need?

TERRANCE

Yeah, I'm in pain.

CLINTON

You're in pain. I lost the only girl I ever loved.

TERRANCE

That's too bad. Um . . . but you see, I hurt my back.

CLINTON

Oh, I've loved others, but nobody like Hilda. She tore me in two when she left me. And who did she leave with? A dance instructor. The guy had body odor. She still liked him better. I tell you, it's tough to take. I'm nothing without her. Nothing.

TERRANCE

It's my lower lumbar. I pulled some muscles a few weeks ago.

CLINTON

You know, if you have a pain you should share it, talk about it, it'll make you feel better.

TERRANCE

Well, I've sprained my back badly!

CLINTON

Really? She hurt her back once. Fell out of a tree.

TERRANCE

Painful experience. The doctor said I should sit.

CLINTON

(not listening)

Did you see a doctor?

TERRANCE

Yea, he said I should sit more than stand - straight back chair - like this one.

CLINTON

I don't understand. If your back is hurting, you should be sitting -- straight back chair is best.

TERRANCE

Think so?

CLINTON

It's only natural. You hurt, you try to relieve your hurt Doggone her. Do you know we spent hours together baking bread? It was a very sensuous experience. Kneading the dough. Rolling it through our fingers. And while it was rising we would

TERRANCE

Do you know how I hurt my back?

CLINTON

Wha . . ? No. How?

TERRANCE

Avocados.

CLINTON

Oh, really.

TERRANCE

Yeah, avocados. I'm in the pits division.

CLINTON

Pits?

TERRANCE

Exactly the reaction I expected. You're thinking "why does this guy have to be talking about something as disgusting as pits?"

CLINTON

I don't think pits are disgusting.

TERRANCE

You don't? Well, you're an enlightened individual. Most people don't even want to think about them.

CLINTON

Some people can't think of certain things. It's a form of prejudice.

TERRANCE

Exactly. Make your mind a blank. What do you think of when I say "pit"?

CLINTON

Butte, Montana.

TERRANCE

Yeah, uh -- The point is you never thought of avocado. And the pit is half of it. And what do people do with it? Nothing. They throw it away.

CLINTON

Seems wasteful.

TERRANCE

You're a very sensitive and perceptive individual. Make your mind go blank again. What do you think of when I say "tree"?

(before CLINTON can answer)

I'll tell you what I think of. I think of my bad back. Sprained it while replanting avocado trees.

CLINTON

That is too bad.

TERRANCE

Not only that, but I just had a meeting with some potential buyers on the 55th floor of a building downtown.

CLINTON

I didn't know we had a building that tall.

TERRANCE

And the elevator didn't work. I had to walk up and down 55 floors with a bad back. And now I can barely stand.

Why don't you sit down?

TERRANCE

Splendid idea!

CLINTON

There are some benches right behind those trees.

TERRANCE

I noticed those. They don't quite offer the support I need. It's my lower lumbar.

CLINTON

Oh.

TERRANCE

Actually, the chair you are sitting in would be fine.

CLINTON

Well, I don't want you to be in pain. But quite honestly I feel very attached to this chair. I'm very comfortable here.

TERRANCE

I understand. There might be another like it a mile or so down the lane. I'm sure I can make it.

(He begins to limp heavily off stage.)

CLINTON

Hold on there. I'm being extremely selfish. Of course you can sit in the chair.

TERRANCE

I don't want to intrude.

CLINTON

Please, I insist.

TERRANCE

Thank you. (sits) Ah, that's better . . . So you're having woman problems.

CLINTON

Yeah, we split up over some dumb argument.

TERRANCE

What was that?

She didn't like me.

TERRANCE

She liked a dancer better, eh?

CLINTON

Yeah, Alfred Putz - a real loser.

TERRANCE

Not as big a loser as you.

CLINTON

I beg your pardon.

TERRANCE

Oh, it's not that you're a loser, it's just that you don't understand things very well. Stupid. That's the word I'm looking for. For example; the avocados? the back?

CLINTON

Yes.

TERRANCE

Nothing but lies, man.

CLINTON

What?

TERRANCE

I was just putting you on. My back's fine. I couldn't tell the difference between an avocado pit and a cow's cud.

CLINTON

I don't understand.

TERRANCE

Nothing to understand. I wanted to sit in this chair . . . you were in it . . . I got you out.

CLINTON

Why didn't you just ask?

TERRANCE

That wouldn't have been any challenge.

CLINTON

But what you did was dishonest. It's stealing.

TERRANCE

You could think of it that way. I think of it more as fun.

Fun! You call taking advantage of someone, then calling him names, fun?

TERRANCE

Yeah.

(angry pause)

CLINTON

Now that you've had your fun, could I have my chair back?

TERRANCE

You still don't understand. I have the chair -- you don't. I'm staying here until I want to leave. So why don't you go bake bread with yourself?

CLINTON

(thinking quickly)

Believe me, I would rather be baking bread then standing here. But I have business to attend to.

TERRANCE

Well, attend to it.

CLINTON

I am. I'm a . . . ah . . . an assistant professor from the University.

TERRANCE

Oh.

CLINTON

Yes. I'm in zoology. My field is . . . uh . . . Snakeology.

TERRANCE

Snakeology?

CLINTON

Study of snakes.

TERRANCE

I thought they called it something else.

CLINTON

Different universities have different names.

TERRANCE

I don't really get into snakes.

Most people don't. They're harmless, unless provoked.

TERRANCE

I try to provoke as few as possible.

CLINTON

Smart.

(pause)

TERRANCE

(a little pensive)

So you're here on business, eh?

CLINTON

Yes, one of our snakes got loose from the laboratory last night.

TERRANCE

Loose! Garter snake?

CLINTON

No, a very exotic and rare species.

TERRANCE

Mexican garter snake?

CLINTON

No, a Chartruse Strangler.

TERRANCE

My God! A Strangler loose!

CLINTON

We know it's in this vicinity. The members of the faculty and students have formed a circle around this area and are slowly closing in, moving the Strangler towards me.

TERRANCE

Here?

CLINTON

I'm known for my quick hands. Not like Raoul.

TERRANCE

A student?

CLINTON

Used to be.

TERRANCE

What do you mean, "used to be"?

CLINTON

He got too close.

TERRANCE

How could anyone get close enough to a snake to let it strangle him.

CLINTON

It was dinnertime. Actually, the Strangler doesn't strangle you. It's a very tiny snake. The name comes from what its poison does to you.

(He clutches his throat - eyeballs roll back.)

TERRANCE

This is nuts, man. Why haven't the police been notified?

CLINTON

At the lab, we take care of our own. I know what to do. Just in case, though.

(Pulls out an aspirin bottle.)

TERRANCE

It looks like aspirin.

CLINTON

Cyanide. Anything is better than the Strangler's death bite.

TERRANCE

Why isn't this area cleared?

CLINTON

Cause a panic.

TERRANCE

Panic. Right, mustn't panic. Probably someone will catch him before he gets here.

CLINTON

I don't think so. Just to make sure the Strangler would come to me the Chief Snakeologist sprayed me with the female's scent. Mating season, you know.

TERRANCE

He'll be here any minute then.

He's going to be mad, too. I'm sure I'm not his type.

TERRANCE

You think I am?

CLINTON

Possibly. Of course, the chair might confuse him.

TERRANCE

The chair?

CLINTON

Oh yes, since I sat on it it will smell like a lady Strangler.

TERRANCE

(jumps up)

My God, I've been sitting on it. What can I do? The scent is all over me.

CLINTON

Do you have any turpentine?

TERRANCE

No.

CLINTON

Well, let's see. Snakes hate movement. If you're running he'll probably shy away.

TERRANCE

Which way should I go?

CLINTON

Doesn't matter. Why don't you try that way.

(Clinton points stage left.)

TERRANCE

Right.

(TERRANCE starts running. CLINTON sits in chair.)

CLINTON

Hold it a second.

TERRANCE

(comes back)

Yes?

If you really want to confuse him, try skipping.

TERRANCE

Skipping.

(He starts skipping off.)

CLINTON

One more thing.

TERRANCE

(skips back)

What?

CLINTON

I was just kidding. There is no snake.

TERRANCE

Yes there is. He's a killer. He . . . what?

CLINTON

No snake. I don't know what came over me, but I thought, why not play a little joke?

TERRANCE

Joke!?

CLINTON

Isn't that funny? I don't know anything about snakeology.

TERRANCE

This is all a joke.

CLINTON

I hope you take it in the spirit it was given.

TERRANCE

(trying to save face)

Oh, certainly. It was rather amusing.

CLINTON

I'm glad you see it that way. One more thing. Don't try to sit in my chair again. At least, not while I'm around.

TERRANCE

No, I wouldn't think of it.

CLINTON

I'll be rested and gone in 5 or 10 minutes, then you can sit in it as long as you want.

TERRANCE

Thank you. I think I'll be going, however. A good walk will do me good. You gave me quite a scare.

CLINTON

Sorry.

TERRANCE

That's quite all right. To be quite honest with you, I admire you. You completely outwitted me, and you're to be commended.

CLINTON

Thank you.

TERRANCE

I'm sure you'll get back together with your girl. What's her name?

CLINTON

Hilda.

TERRANCE

I'm sure Hilda will see what an extrordinary guy you are. Hang in there.

CLINTON

I will, thank you.

TERRANCE

(feels yo-yo in his pocket)

If you would be so gracious, I wish you would accept this. You deserve it more than I do.

(TERRANCE hands CLINTON the stringless yo-yo he picked up off the chair.)

CLINTON

It's a yo-yo without a string.

TERRANCE

It's magic. Uncle Silas called it, "Yo".

CLINTON

Magic? Who is this Uncle Silas fellow?

TERRANCE

Most people think he's a bit eccentric. Rambles on about weddings and wedding cakes. There's no denying he is touched with certain unexplainable powers, though.

Primitive sort, eh?

TERRANCE

Yeah.

CLINTON

And he's made this yo-yo magic?

TERRANCE

Yo.

CLINTON

Yes.

TERRANCE

No, the yo-yo is called Yo.

CLINTON

Oh. And you say . . . uh . . . Yo is magic.

TERRANCE

You believe in magic?

CLINTON

Of course I don't believe in magic. What a preposterous idea. I'm an educated man. Don't be silly.

TERRANCE

I didn't say you did. I was just asking.

CLINTON

Well, I don't!

TERRANCE

O.K. O.K.

CLINTON

Just idle curiousity is all.

TERRANCE

Sorry.

(pause)

CLINTON

Hypothetically speaking, of course. You say Uncle Silas made Yo magic.

TERRANCE

That's what he says. And he has walked the strange side more than once. But really, a magic yo-yo.

Then why are you giving it to me?

TERRANCE

Well, it's an interesting item . . . a momento for outwitting me.

CLINTON

(sincerely touched)

Oh, that is awfully kind of you.

TERRANCE

I don't suppose we'll be seeing each other again. But I will always carry with me a deep admiration for a man that is far better than I.

CLINTON

Oh, not far better. A little smarter, a little more street savvy, perhaps. I know how to handle difficult situations better, more of a leader, better looking -- but far better? Well, I don't think so.

TERRANCE

Yes . . . I hope Yo brings you luck.

(TERRANCE exits stage right.)

CLINTON

Don't mention it. Anytime, if you need any advice, I . . .

(CLINTON sees he is by himself. He looks Yo over then puts it into his pocket.

Enter BALLOONMAN.)

BALLOONMAN

Balloons! Yo-yos! Pretzels! Want a balloon, sir?

CLINTON

No, thank you.

BALLOONMAN

Some pretzels, or a yo-yo perhaps?

CLINTON

I already have a yo-yo.

BALLOONMAN

That's good to hear. Most men your age would think it was dumb to have a yo-yo.

Well, actually I do think it's foolish for a grown man to have a yo-yo. But this is different. My yo-yo is magic.

BALLOONMAN

(delighted)

Magic, eh?

CLINTON

Yes.

BALLOONMAN

What does it do?

CLINTON

I don't know, but . . . uh . . . I'm sure it does many wonderful things.

BALLOONMAN

May I see it?

CLINTON

Sure.

(CLINTON hands Yo to BALLOONMAN. He doesn't realize it was originally his. He compares it to his yo-yos without CLINTON seeing him do it. He thinks his might be magic.)

BALLOONMAN

Magic, eh?

CLINTON

Yep.

BALLOONMAN

(hands it back)

Well, use it wisely.

CLINTON

Of course.

(BALLOONMAN exits looking at

his yo-yos.)

BALLOONMAN

Maaagic!

I wonder how you do use it?

(TERRANCE enters dressed in a long trench coat, glasses, an old hat, and a long beard. Around his neck and on his coat are some pots and pans. Hopefully he will not be recognized by the audience for a little while.

He has a bunch of sticks in his hand.)

TERRANCE

(throws sticks on ground toward CLINTON)

Speak to me o' voices of the sticks. Unleash your mighty power, at least until I find you all, dag dab it!

CLINTON

Here's one.

TERRANCE

Hold on there, boy. Which way is it pointing? Why it's pointing right at you.

CLINTON

No, it isn't. It's pointing that way.

TERRANCE

Do you know anything about magic sticks?

CLINTON

No.

TERRANCE

Then how do you know which di-rec-tion it's pointing?

CLINTON

It just seemed

TERRANCE

Are you Joseph Spelnick?

CLINTON

No . . .

Because if you are I'm going to your sister's wedding tonight just to spit on her cake. I hate her. Dad blasted woman bit my wife one day for sipping tea through a sponge.

CLINTON

Strange, I didn't know people did such things.

TERRANCE

You sayin' my wife's strange?

CLINTON

No, I'm sure she's perfectly normal.

TERRANCE

That's correct, she's dead.

CLINTON

From being bitten?!

TERRANCE

Nay, bad ticker. Felt so bad after Truman lost to Dewey, she gave up and died.

CLINTON

But Truman won.

TERRANCE

He did? Why in the blazes didn't I hear about this sooner!

CLINTON

He was in the White House for four years. Didn't you suspect something from that?

TERRANCE

Nay, I did think he was a poor loser.

CLINTON

Anyway, that was thirty years ago. Joseph Spelnick must be a very old man.

TERRANCE

Who in tarnation cares about Joseph Spelnick. I'm looking for his sister.

CLINTON

Well, how old is his sister?

TERRANCE

As the crow flies?

As what flies?

TERRANCE

Crows, boy. Crows. You deaf?

CLINTON

I'm not talking about crows. I'm talking about age! Age!

TERRANCE

Calm down, there. Just 'cause you don't like elderly people is no reason to get riled up. We're people too, you know.

CLINTON

I love elderly people.

TERRANCE

Well, don't get kinky. There's got to be some limits.

CLINTON

All I want to know is how old Joseph Spelnick's sister is.

TERRANCE

Old enough to be dead twice. And she smells like it, too. Which reminds me, I got to be mosin' on to her wedding . . .

CLINTON

Wedding? . . . Wedding! Is your name Silas? Uncle Silas?!

TERRANCE

Ah ha! So you are Joseph Spelnick. At last we meet. Say, do you have a tweed jacket I could wear? I left mine at the cleaners. Just for tonight.

CLINTON

No, I'm not Joseph Spelnick. I'm an acquaintance of your nephew's.

TERRANCE

My nephew? About so tall? (describes himself)

CLINTON

Yes, that's him.

TERRANCE

Don't know him then. My nephew is 4 feet two inches and weighs 370 -- conducts classes for bowling balls.

CLINTON

Well, he gave me this and said you gave it to him.

Yo! He gave you Yo? How did he bamboozle you into that?

CLINTON

He gave it to me out of admiration.

TERRANCE

Admiration. You must love to dance to accept such a magical gift.

CLINTON

No, I don't love to dance.

TERRANCE

Oh, then it is a curse.

CLINTON

Curse?

TERRANCE

You must have done something down right terrible to him.

CLINTON

I simply regained what was mine.

TERRANCE

Ah, and now you'll pay by bein' a toe stomper for the rest of your life.

CLINTON

But I don't want to be a toe stomper.

TERRANCE

Those who believe in magic and possess Yo will dance forever.

CLINTON

Well, I . . . I . . . don't believe in magic.

(CLINTON throws Yo over his shoulder.)

TERRANCE

That's good because if you did, you would be paralyzed from the eyebrows down for throwing him away like that.

CLINTON

Eyebrows down?

TERRANCE

Yep.

(CLINTON hurriedly retrieves Yo.)

CLINTON

Just kidding, Yo.

TERRANCE

So, you will be a dancer.

CLINTON

But I don't like dancers. I don't like to dance. Why I even flunked out of my intermediate Frug lessons.

TERRANCE

There is a way that one can break the spell. I won't guarantee it will work. And if you fail you're goin' to be a dancin' fool the rest of your life.

CLINTON

I'm doomed to dance anyway, right?

TERRANCE

That's true. But Yo will know you tried to snafoo him. He has feelings too, you know. He'll force you to limbo everytime you hear the Pepsi-Cola song.

CLINTON

I love that song, too. But that's only if I don't get rid of him.

TERRANCE

That's right. I'm just letting you know about the dangers involved.

CLINTON

I'll risk it. What'll I do?

(TERRANCE takes out a book of magic from his coat.)

TERRANCE

Let's see here. First you gotta heave Yo as far as you can muster so that you lose sight of each other. Then you gotta disguise yourself. Then you must jump up and down three times yelling, "No Boogie".

TERRANCE

Three times.

CLINTON

Three times. I'll do it, yeah, by golly, I'll do it. The only thing, I don't have a disguise.

Danged if I don't have something here.

(pulls out glasses with bushy

eyebrows and nose)

Don't put them on until after you've thrown Yo.

CLINTON

Right . . . Well, Yo, nice day isn't it? How you been? You know, I was just talking to someone the other day about how pretty certain yo-yos are. In fact, I saw one over those trees I'm sure you'd like to meet. So, get lost turkey!

(CLINTON gives Yo a heave off stage right. He comes back, puts glasses on, and starts jumping up and down.)

CLINTON

No Boogie. No Boogie. No Boogie.

(Yo, thrown by DIRECTOR, comes flying from stage left and lands at CLINTON'S feet.)

CLINTON

(to Yo)

No Boogie.

TERRANCE

Tarnation, you're in a heap 'a trouble there, boy.

CLINTON

Can you bribe a yo-yo?

TERRANCE

I wouldn't try it.

CLINTON

Eyebrows down, eh?

TERRANCE

Yep. It won't be that bad, young fella. You'll learn how to Tango.

CLINTON

I don't want to Tango. I refuse to let a yo-yo control my destiny. I will not be intimidated

TERRANCE

(checks book)

Calm down. Calm down. We'll lick this sit-ee-a-tion yet.

Maybe you need a better disguise. And put a little more gumption in your "No Boogie."

CLINTON

Yes, that's it. More gumption.

TERRANCE

And a better disguise. Here, why don't you put this on?

(TERRANCE pulls a dress out of

his coat.)

CLINTON

A dress?

TERRANCE

It's your size.

CLINTON

I know, but look at the design. I never liked sleeveless.

TERRANCE

It's the only way to confuse Yo. Do you want to break the curse, or not?

CLINTON

O.K. O.K.

(CLINTON races to stage right, throws Yo, rushes back and puts dress on, then starts jumping up and down.)

CLINTON

No Boogie. No Boogie. No Boogie.

TERRANCE

Louder.

CLINTON

NO BOOGIE! NO BOOGIE! NO BOOGIE!

TERRANCE

(sits in chair, takes off coat and hands it to CLINTON)

Here, this should help.

CLINTON

(takes it, puts it on)

NO BOOGIE!

(takes off beard and hat and gives them to him)

Try these.

CLINTON

NO BOOGIE! . . . No boogie . . . No bo . . . oh.

(pause - CLINTON looks at TERRANCE and TERRANCE smiles back. CLINTON starts skipping around the chair.)

I knew it all the time. I knew it all the time. Do you think I'd fall for the old magic Yo trick? What do you think I am?

(pause - CLINTON looks at himself then leaps for the chair)

Gimme the chair! I want the chair! Gimme!

TERRANCE

Maintain some dignity.

(CLINTON pulls back, looks at himself.)

CLINTON

Dignity? How can I maintain any dignity?

TERRANCE

I guess you can't really. Maybe sleeveless will come back.

CLINTON

And all because of a stupid yo-yo.

TERRANCE

That is stupid. I really didn't think you'd fall for it. Only a complete idiot could possibly believe in a magic yo-yo.

CLINTON

Idiot, eh? I've done stupider things than this before.

TERRANCE

Really? That's hard to imagine. Anyway, don't try to get the chair again. You'll just make a bigger fool out of yourself.

(CLINTON storms off stage left.)

Why don't you go find Yo. You could be another Fred Astaire, or even Ginger Rogers.

(TERRANCE giggles extremely pleased with himself. Enter BALLOONMAN.)

BALLOONMAN

Balloons! Yo-yos! Pretzels!

(This is supposed to be TER-RANCE's cue to ask BALLOONMAN for a balloon, but HE is so pleased with HIMSELF He misses the cue. BALLOONMAN walks by, then back & gives cue again.)

BALLOONMAN

Balloons! Yo-yos! Pretzels!

(pause - then directly at TERRANCE)

Would you like a balloon, sir?

TERRANCE

What? Oh, balloon. Yes, I'll have one.

BALLOONMAN

I thought you might.

(He gives TERRANCE balloon then waits for next cue, which doesn't

come.)

I bet you can't figure out why I'm selling balloons.

TERRANCE

Oh yes, right. Tell me, why is a young man like you selling balloons?

BALLOONMAN

Sure you want to know?

TERRANCE

(not really)

Yeah, sure.

BALLOONMAN

'Cause it's fun. And kids like 'em. Oh, not all kids, but most kids. Ernie doesn't like balloons, but he likes pretzels. You want a pretzel?

(shows pretzels)

I got a black yo-yo that really rocks the baby good.

(shows yo-yos)

TERRANCE

No, I don't need a yo-yo. I got the balloon, that's all I need Nice talking to you Good-bye.

BALLOONMAN

You owe me a quarter.

TERRANCE

Oh, excuse me. Here. Forgot.

BALLOONMAN

Good-bye. Enjoy your balloon.

(TERRANCE holds balloon. He remembers CLINTON and begins to giggle.

CLINTON enters with dress in hand. He is talking to someone off stage left.)

CLINTON

Are you sure? O.K. Maybe we could just cut the balloon scene? No. O.K.

(He walks in front of chair and talks to audience)

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm sorry, the director has informed me that we're running a little late so we're ending the show here. I'm sorry but . . .

TERRANCE

Wait. What do you mean? We aren't running late.

CLINTON

Well, (DIRECTOR'S name) said finish it up so we can start production on the next play. I'm sorry ladies and gentlemen, I hope you enjoyed the . . .

TERRANCE

No, just hold it. Excuse us, please . . . Listen, I don't care what (DIRECTOR'S name) says, if we start a show we finish it.

CLINTON

Hey, I agree. And I tried to tell him that. He might be hitting the bottle, I don't know. Anyway, he said, "Get out there and end the show."

TERRANCE

We aren't even doing the balloon scene?

CLINTON

Nope.

TERRANCE

He can't do that. Ladies and gentlemen, there will be a brief intermission and we'll be right back for the rest of the show. So don't go away . . . Let's go talk to him.

CLINTON

O.K.

(TERRANCE starts off stage with balloon -- CLINTON sits in chair)

Hey, (TERRANCE'S real name.)

Yeah.

CLINTON

I don't want you to take this wrong. I want you to understand perfectly what I'm going to say. Straight talk, man to man.

TERRANCE

O.K.

CLINTON

I want you to line your nasal passages with this dress.

TERRANCE

What?

CLINTON

Cram it up your nose! And (TERRANCE'S name), as far as I'm concerned the show is over 'cause I ain't moving.

TERRANCE

This is all a put on. (DIRECTOR'S name) didn't say anything?

CLINTON

That pipsqueak wouldn't know what to say if you asked him his name.

TERRANCE

You can't do this. We have a show to put on.

CLINTON

Tough.

TERRANCE

Tough! You're making a mockery of the acting profession. We are here to serve a purpose, to entertain. These people aren't going to sit here and take this. They demand something out of us and we must give it to them to the best of our ability. No audience should take such unprofessionalism.

MAN IN AUDIENCE

I agree. On with the show.

LADY IN AUDIENCE

Yeah, or get that bum off the stage.

CLINTON

Keep out of this.

MAN

(comes on stage)

No, we won't keep out of this. Martha and I came to be entertained. All the way from Butte. Come here Martha.

(MARTHA stays seated)

She's a little shy.

CLINTON

Oh, my God.

LADY

(comes on stage with balloon in hand)

Who cares about your damn wife? I want to see a show. Now are you going to move or not?

CLINTON

You know where I told him to stick this dress, lady? Well, let me tell you where you can stick it!

> (Enter DIRECTOR with 2 STAGEHANDS behind him.

MARTHA has sneaked on stage and is trying to pull MAN back to their seats.)

DIRECTOR

Hold it! Hold it! Cut! Whatever you say, just stop. (CLINTON's name), you have made a complete shambles of this Ruined it! And along with it you ruined any chance of becoming an actor.

CLINTON

Fat chance I had with you directing me, anyway.

DIRECTOR

I've had enough, get off the chair.

CLINTON

"I've had enough, get off the chair". All week it's been, "Get off the chair" -- "Get in the dress quicker". You were never satisfied. It's been you and (TERRANCE'S name) all along. You throw (TERRANCE'S name) the yo-yo, you help (TERRANCE'S name) with his lines, while I got nothing. Well, I got the chair now and nobody's going to take it.

LADY

(goes to DIRECTOR)

Can I hit him?

DIRECTOR

Hold on, lady. (STAGEHANDS' names), let's get him out of here.

(STAGEHANDS, DIRECTOR, LADY IN AUDIENCE carry CLINTON off stage, yelling and kicking.

MARTHA takes MAN back to their seats.

DIRECTOR goes to TERRANCE.)

DIRECTOR

I guess you'll have to finish it yourself.

(DIRECTOR exits.

Enter LADY, who goes to TERRANCE.)

LADY

Don't worry, we've taken care of him.

TERRANCE

Sit down, lady.

(lady sits - TERRANCE addresses the
audience)

I don't really know what to say. I'm sorry for this unfortunate incident. I've always considered (CLINTON'S name) to be a responsible, sane individual. But as we all have seen he's a complete imbecile with the morals of a worm. His behavior is inexcusable, but I apologize for him anyway. However, we mustn't judge people. Perhaps he is like this because of his upbringing. I've heard rumors that his mother accepts gifts from strangers. And what we know of his father would make many longshoremen blush. But as I was saying, judging a person . . .

(CLINTON enters, instinctively TERRANCE sits in chair.)

CLINTON

I came back to apologize.

TERRANCE

Yeah, sure.

CLINTON

No, I mean it. I don't know what came over me. I've had a lot of pressure on me this week. I flipped out and I'm sorry.

Little late to be sorry.

CLINTON

I know. It's just that my girl and I really did have a fight. It's Josie, not Hilda. We broke it off right before rehearsals. It's been tough. Well, you know.

TERRAMCE

Yeah, that's too bad. Why don't you leave now. (DIRECTOR'S name) told me to finish up.

CLINTON

I just got through apologizing to (DIRECTOR'S name). I asked if I could come out here and apologize to you and the audience. I realize you'll finish the show. I certainly don't deserve to.

TERRANCE

Oh. Well, sure go ahead (CLINTON'S name). I was just telling the people here what a great guy you were.

CLINTON

Thanks (TERRANCE'S name). You know ladies and gentlemen, I owe a lot to this guy. He's helped me overcome many problems. I don't know where I'd be today without him.

TERRANCE

You don't have to thank me.

CLINTON

Yes, I do. Without you, without this great person I call friend, ladies and gentlemen, I might be on some curb asking for quarters.

TERRANCE

Well, it's because I like you (CLINTON'S name).

CLINTON

I know. You care. You care enough to love people. Well (TERRANCE'S name), let me tell you . . . I love you.

TERRANCE

I love you too, (CLINTON'S name).

CLINTON

And (TERRANCE'S NAME) . . . I'd like to sleep with you.

TERRANCE

What!?

There's no controlling my fellings (TERRANCE'S name). All week we've been so close.

TERRANCE

We're on stage, people are watching us.

CLINTON

I say "get it out of the closet". What does it matter if you're in love.

TERRANCE

I didn't mean that kind of love. In fact, I don't love you at all.

CLINTON

Don't fight it (TERRANCE'S name). It's stronger than the both of us. What do you think Josie and I have been fighting about? I don't want her anymore, I want you.

TERRANCE

Get away from me. You disgust me.

CLINTON

You didn't say that last night in my VW.

TERRANCE

Lies, all lies. I barely know this pervert.

CLINTON

The moon was shining. It made your hair glisten.

(CLINTON moves in. TERRANCE jumps up. CLINTON sits in chair.)

TERRANCE

My hair has never glistened in it's life.

CLINTON

Are you sure?

TERRANCE

Of course, I'm sure.

CLINTON

I could have you confused with someone else. Oh yes, now I remember, it was Pushkin, my long-haired Samoyed.

TERRANCE

A dog?

It could have been I don't really know. The moon does crazy things to me.

(TERRANCE realizes he's out of the chair. CLINTON begins to notice the balloon.)

TERRANCE

You're sitting in my chair.

CLINTON

My goodness, I certainly am.

TERRANCE

Well, get out. I have to finish the show.

CLINTON

(TERRANCE'S name), I'd really like to, but I just can't take a person seriously when he is standing with a balloon in his hand. You look stupid. Here, maybe this will help.

(CLINTON grabs balloon and pops it, then looks at TERRANCE.)

No. No, you still look stupid.

TERRANCE

(DIRECTOR'S name)! (DIRECTOR'S name)!

(DIRECTOR enters)

He won't let me sit in the chair.

DIRECTOR

I've had it with you two. You're both through as far as I'm concerned.

(STAGEHAND peeks head out from stage right. He has telephone in his hand.)

STAGEHAND

(DIRECTOR'S name).

DIRECTOR

What?

STAGEHAND

It's (Head of Theatre). He wants to talk to you about the way you're directing the show.

(DIRECTOR goes toward phone.)

TERRANCE

(DIRECTOR'S name) wait. Give me one more chance.

DIRECTOR

One more chance? I'll give you five minutes to get your belongings and get out. That's the chance I'll give you. Because you're through! Understand me? Through! As in finished for good!

(DIRECTOR exits stage right.)

TERRANCE

I may be through, but I'm sitting in that chair.

(He exits and then enters with a

long knife.)

You'll never get out of here alive!

CLINTON

Aaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhh!

(CLINTON jumps out of the way of TERRANCE'S swinging knife. TERRANCE stands on chair.)

TERRANCE

You come near me again bring a mop and a bucket with you.

(CLINTON exits then enters with a gun. He points it at TERRANCE.)

CLINTON

Move.

TERRANCE

You wouldn't shoot.

CLINTON

(pulls trigger back)

Move.

TERRANCE

I'm going. I'm going. But I'll be back.

(TERRANCE exits. CLINTON sits attentive, nervous.

Enter 3 MEN dressed in SWAT uniforms and carrying rifles. They place themselves strategically around the stage and audience.

CLINTON tips his chair over and is crouched behind it.

Enter TERRANCE with a helmet
and a megaphone.)

TERRANCE

(into megaphone)

O.K. (CLINTON'S name), you're surrounded. You don't have a chance. Come off the chair with your hands up.

CLINTON

You'll never take me alive.

TERRANCE

Throw your gun out (CLINTON'S name).

CLINTON

Come and get it.

TERRANCE

All right, I didn't want to do this, but you forced me into it.

(TERRANCE goes off stage and leads old lady onto stage.)

CLINTON

Ma! What are you doing here?

MΑ

(CLINTON'S name), you come out from behind that chair this instant.

CLINTON

This is no place for you, ma. Go home.

MA

Son, I want you to give me that gun.

TERRANCE

Listen to your mother, (CLINTON'S name).

CLINTON

You don't understand ma. It's a matter of principle. Nothing can get me off this chair now.

TERRANCE

Nothing. We'll see about that.

(TERRANCE goes off stage and brings JOSIE on stage.)

Josie! You've come back. Will you button up that blouse. There are people watching.

JOSIE

Can we stop arguing about what I wear?

CLINTON

I'm sorry. You better leave. Take ma with you. This is no place for a woman.

JOSIE

Come off it (CLINTON'S name), this is a play, or it was until you went beserk.

CLINTON

Me! (TERRANCE'S name) tried to stab me with a machete.

JOSIE

He says he's sorry, (CLINTON'S name).

TERRANCE

That's right. It was all a mistake. It won't happen again.

CLINTON

You bet your booties it won't happen again.

TERRANCE

We're running out of time. Talk to him, Josie.

JOSIE

Can we talk, (CLINTON'S name)?

CLINTON

Sure.

(JOSIE gingerly walks to

CLINTON.)

TERRANCE

Hold your fire, men.

CLINTON

Did you hear that? They're out to get me, I tell you.

JOSIE

(gets behind chair)

If you would put your gun down they won't do anything to you. (TERRANCE'S name) told me all he wants to do is talk to the audience for one minute.

You can't trust him, Josie. He'd do anything to get this chair.

JOSIE

You trust me, don't you?

CLINTON

Of course I do.

JOSIE

I know you did this because of me.

CLINTON

I did?

JOSIE

Of course you did. I think you're very brave.

CLINTON

I did what I had to do, Josie.

JOSIE

I accept that (CLINTON'S name). I wish you could accept how I dress.

CLINTON

I accept how you dress. You always look beautiful to me. I always start that argument to cover up our real problem.

JOSIE

You mean . . . in bed?

CLINTON

Yeah.

JOSIE

(CLINTON'S name), that's nonsense. We can work that out.

CLINTON

You mean it?!

JOSIE

Of course I mean it.

CLINTON

Then you'll do my favorite?

JOSIE

For Pete's sake, not here. We'll talk about it later.

Ah, you don't really mean it.

JOSIE

But I do.

CLINTON

Then you'll do my favorite?

JOSIE

(CLINTON'S name), putting on Minnie Mouse ears and skirt, then saying "Here Pluto" is not my idea of an erotic evening.

CLINTON

Well, yours is no better. I crawl under the bed, shake it and growl, "Look out. I'm going to get you."

JOSIE

You get me, don't you?

CLINTON

Yeah. But I feel real silly in that devil's costume; little horns sticking out.

JOSIE

I think you look cute.

CLINTON

Yeah, but I still feel silly.

JOSIE

Maybe if I let out your leotards?

CLINTON

No Josie, that's not it. I only do it 'cause I know it makes you happy. But I don't enjoy it.

JOSIE

Well, I want you to be happy, too.

CLINTON

We should be able to work something out, Josie.

JOSIE

We will (CLINTON'S name). We will.

CLINTON

(idea strikes)

Say! Have you ever baked bread?

JOSIE

Yes.

TERRANCE

Enough with the bread! We're running out of time!

JOSIE

(CLINTON'S name), can't you give (TERRANCE'S name) one minute to talk.

CLINTON

Well, O.K.

TERRANCE

I'm not coming on until he gives up the gun.

CLINTON

I ain't giving up my gun.

JOSIE

Please, give me the gun (CLINTON'S name). He promised that you can sit in the chair and end the show. He just wants to address the audience for one minute. It only seems fair.

CLINTON

O.K. But only one minute.

(CLINTON gives gun to JOSIE)

TERRANCE

Grab him!

(SWAT MEMBERS converge on CLINTON and knock him semi-conscious, then bring him to TERRANCE.)

JOSIE

What are you doing? You said you only wanted to talk.

TERRANCE

I'll talk all right; but it will be with him off the stage.

MΑ

You lied. You said you wouldn 't hurt him.

TERRANCE

Who cares what I said. His kind doesn't deserve human treatment. He's an animal.

MA

And you had such an honest face.

Get them out of here. (disgustedly) "Here Pluto".

(SWAT MEMBERS roughly take CLINTON, JOSIE, and MA off stage left. TERRANCE royally goes to chair.

SWAT MEMBERS return.)

TERRANCE

Hold your position men, I only intend on making a short speech on a few policy changes before I end the show.

(pulls out a sheet of paper that is

three feet long)

Hither to, all persons coming within three feet of . . .

SWAT I

Hold on here. We did what you wanted, now where's our money.

TERRANCE

Could you wait just a second? I'd like to finish my speech.

SWAT I

(goes to other SWAT MEMBERS)

He wants us to wait.

(SWAT MEMBERS grumble their disapproval.)

SWAT I

Well, hurry up and finish it.

TERRANCE

O.K. O.K. Hither to, all persons coming within three feet of . . .

(Enter BALLOONMAN from

audience.)

BALLOONMAN

Balloons. Yo-yos.

TERRANCE

Now what?!

BALLOONMAN

Geepers?! What's happened here?

TERRANCE

Hold your fire men. It's only (BALLOONMAN'S name).

BALLOONMAN

What are you doing? What's happened to the play?

TERRANCE

The play is finished. I've made an official take over. However, this area has not been completely secured yet, so it would be wise for you to leave.

BALLOONMAN

The play is finished? But I'm supposed to sell balloons.

TERRANCE

(pulls out script)

Let's see here. Yes, that's right. You were supposed to come out, give (CLINTON'S name) and me a balloon, and we'd skip off happily and the show would end with you on the chair.

(tears up script, then throws it to ground)

But that's all over now. It's every man for himself!

BALLOONMAN

But I don't understand. I have a job to do. I have a job to do.

TERRANCE

You, over there. Get him out of here. Be careful with him. Poor blighter, lost his marbles.

(SWAT II lowers gun at BALLOONMAN. He inches off stage through audience. TERRANCE starts reading his policy again.)

Furthermore, all those that come within a mile of my chair will be required to pay a tax of \$200; or they must have wooden 2 by 4's in their pants so that they cannot sit. Also . . .

(A mini-motorcycle starts up and roars in lobby.)

TERRANCE

My God, he's got a tank!

(SWAT MEMBERS and CLINTON scramble for cover.

CLINTON drives on stage through audience. He has old airplane headgear and goggles. He skids to a stop and jumps TERRANCE, who is trying to get back into chair.)

Bonzi, you die!

(CLINTON and TERRANCE try to pull chair from each other.

SWAT MEMBERS want to shoot but the fighting is too close, plus they haven't been paid by TERRANCE and they aren't sure killing him will get them their money.

The MAN IN THE AUDIENCE had his foot inadvertantly run over by CLINTON'S mini-motorcycle. He and MARTHA are furious at CLINTON. They slowly stalk on stage.

LADY IN AUDIENCE doesn't want to be left out and she also wants to save TERRANCE from the menacing SWAT MEMBERS, so she steps in between them.

DIRECTOR storms on stage. He's just been fired.)

DIRECTOR

I'm going to kill you two!

(ALL MEMBERS OF CAST slowly, threateningly, walk toward CLINTON and TERRANCE.

CLINTON and TERRANCE stop and look at CAST.)

TERRANCE

Run for it!

(CLINTON and TERRANCE make a break and exit stage right.)

DIRECTOR

After them!

(CAST exits stage right.

Stage is empty.

Enter TERRANCE and CLINTON, who go for chair and start fighting over it.)

DIRECTOR (off stage)

There they are!

(Enter CAST. They chase CLINTON and TERRANCE through audience out to the lobby.

The stage is again empty.

Enter JOSIE with Minnie Mouse
ears and skirt on.)

JOSIE

(CLINTON'S name). (CLINTON'S name). I'll do your favorite. (CLINTON'S name)?

(Enter CLINTON and TERRANCE from lobby followed by CAST.

BALLOONMAN toddles in behind CAST, but stays away from the action, both amazed and afraid.)

JOSIE

(CLINTON'S name)!

CLINTON

Not now, Josie.

(CAST surrounds CLINTON and TERRANCE. Slowly they move in. CAST jump them and there is a big melee.

CLINTON and TERRANCE crawl out and break for lobby.)

DIRECTOR

Wait a minute! Where did they go?

(CAST looks around. They then all look at BALLOONMAN, who points toward the lobby.)

DIRECTOR

That way!

(CAST exits through audience.

Enter MA from stage left. She sees mini-motorcycle, jumps on it, starts it up and drives out through audience to lobby.

BALLOONMAN stunned goes to chair. Sits. He at first is uncertain, but then realizes he is in the chair where he belongs -- where the original script had him all along.)

BALLOONMAN

Balloons. Yo-yos . . . (happier) . . . Balloons! Yo-yos!

(Quick fade.

Black out.)

THE END

LIST OF PROPERTIES

CHAIR OVERCOAT (FOR BALLOONMAN) BALLOONS STRING YO-YOS PRETZELS SCISSORS OVERCOAT (FOR UNCLE SILAS) **BEARD** PROSPECTOR'S HAT POTS AND PANS BOOK OF MAGIC BUSHY EYEBROWS AND BIG NOSE GLASSES DRESS (SLEEVELESS) LONG SWORD PISTOL RIFLES (3) SOLDIER'S HELMET MEGAPHONE SCRIPT ROLL OF PAPER (3 FEET LONG) MINI-MOTORCYCLE MINNIE MOUSE EARS AND SKIRT

OLD AIRPLANE HEADGEAR

AIRPLANE GOGGLES