The endless hordes of Hollywood tourists in the late 1940's are easy marks for a con-man magician like Harry Merlinsky. He knows how to sucker the rubes and flash the ol' hamster-outta-the-fedora every now and then, to baffle 'em and dazzle 'em. But he didn't expect a naive fan like Jake, who wants to learn Harry's Old Knowledge - "real" magic. Harry's archenemy obliterates Jake's girlfriend, forcing Jake to become a wizard, just to stay alive. Will Jake use his newfound powers for vengeance? The timeless myth of the Sorcerer's Apprentice unfolds against the backdrop of the Magic Castle and the Hollywoodland sign.

Lineage: 12th-century folklore myths begat The Sorcerer's Apprentice by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, which begat a tone poem by composer Paul Dukás, which begat Disney's Fantasia, which inspired Merlinsky, a magical action-adventure. [Completed before the Nicolas Cage film was released.]

Quarterfinalist in these competitions: American Zoetrope, Writers Network.

Find Merlinsky on Facebook: http://facebook.com/mrlnsky

ToC Bookmarks: MAGIC CASTLE "PALACE OF MYSTERY" UNCLE RALPH'S CABIN OSTRICH CORRAL SKULL ROCK

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

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - CONTINUOUS

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

HARRY: It's just another publicity stunt to attract househunters up into those godforsaken hills, folks. Let's get back down to business. Where's the ace of spades? Card number one, two or three? Larry, Moe or Curly? Nixon, Haldemann or Ehrlichman?

(pause, perplexed) Wait a minute, that's a little ahead of this time, ain't it?

INT. TROLLEY ON THE BOULEVARD - CONTINUOUS

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

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - CONTINUOUS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JAKE: Me??!

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

JAKE: Oh, no!

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

The crowd parts, and pushes Jake to the front.

JAKE: Jake Timmons, from St. Louis!

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

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

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

Harry becomes absorbed in setting up the shells.

Harry examines one of the shells.

Harry touches Man #1, with the cards:

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

MAN #1: Yes.

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

Harry looks over at Jake.

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

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

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

Harry indicates Jake with a small motion of his head.

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

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

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

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

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

HARRY: (continuing, to the crowd)

Everybody see it?

CROWD: Yes!

Harry, still facing the crowd, to Jake:

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

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

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

Crowd responds with mixed yesses and noes.

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

Harry looks back toward Jake:

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

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

*EXT. "HOLLYWOODLAND" SIGN - CONTINUOUS*

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

*EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - CONTINUOUS*

Harry clenches his teeth and mutters, under his breath:

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

**JAKE:** What?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**CROWD** (resounding): Yes!

Harry smiles and turns back to the table and Jake.

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

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

**HARRY** (continuing): All the aces and queens gone?

**MAN #1**: Yes.

**HARRY**: Then separate the face cards from the number cards.

Harry turns back to Jake:

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

**JAKE**: Yes.

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

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

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

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

The crowd applauds.

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

The crowd reacts to each shell.

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

The crowd groans.

Harry examines the pin, then remembers Man #1:

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

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

Harry lets the crowd in on the con:
HARRY: Kept him busy, didn't I? He thought I was actually gonna use those cards.
      Harry admonishes Man #1:
HARRY (continuing): What the heck am I gonna do with a deck with no aces and
      queens?
      Harry waves the man off, dismissing the idea, then reaches for the bowling pin again.
      As he looks down the street, he sees something that rattles him. He takes off his fedora,
      lays it on the ground, and starts packing up his kit.
HARRY (continuing, hurriedly): Folks, I'm sorry, the bowling pin will hafta wait until
      the next show, just down the street here, in a half-hour. If you enjoyed yourselves, you
      can show your appreciation in a concrete way by droppin' something in the hat. And I
      don't mean gum wrappers!
      The crowd starts to disperse, some dropping money into the hat. Jake walks up to
      Harry.
JAKE: I wish I had seen more of your show... you're good! I'd love to learn how you do
      all that stuff.
HARRY: Glad ya liked it, kid... maybe we can set up some lessons for ya.
      Harry looks out of the corner of his eye, down the street, and starts packing his
      things in a rush.
HARRY (continuing): Look, kid, can ya do me a favor?
      JAKE: Sure!
HARRY: Take the money in that hat, put it in your pocket, and limp down the street, that
      way.
      Harry points in the opposite direction from the one that's been bothering him.
      JAKE: I can't take your money!
HARRY: It's just temporary, sport... I'll catch up with ya later. And if anyone chases ya,
      run.
      JAKE: What do you mean?
HARRY: You know, run, as in walking very fast. Now take the cash and get going, and
      do a good limp.
      Jake hesitates, then picks up the money, grabs his suitcase, and limps off down the
      street. From the other direction, OFFICER FINN, a fat, sweating policeman, walks up to
      Harry.
FINN: Harry, if I've told you once, I've told you a million times; if you want to do this
      for money, get a permit.
HARRY: Joe, I'm not doing it for money... it's for charity. See, there's no money in my
      hat... I gave it all to that crippled kid.
FINN: An accomplice, eh?
      Finn heads after Jake.
FINN (continuing, to Jake): Hey kid, come back here, I want to talk to you.
      Jake looks around, confused.
HARRY (yelling): Run, kid, run. He thinks you stole it!
      Jake, frightened, takes off running. Harry finishes packing, and lights out the other
      way. Finn, seeing he's been had, starts in one direction, then the other. He clearly doesn't
      like the prospect of running in the heat, and shrugs, mopping his brow.
EXT. VINE STREET - ONE HOUR LATER
Jake strolls aimlessly down the street, carrying his suitcase and looking in restaurant windows... he's hungry.

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

*EXT. VINE STREET ALLEY - CONTINUOUS*

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

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

**JAKE:** Sorry, Mr. Merlinsky.

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

**JAKE:** Jake Timmons, sir.

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

**JAKE:** Your apprentice?!

**HARRY:** Ya hafta keep an eye on your wallet, too.

Harry hands Jake's wallet back to him.

**JAKE** (astounded): How'd you do that? When do I start? Being your apprentice, I mean? Can we eat first? What...

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

Jake pulls some coins out of his pocket.

**JAKE:** Here's your money...

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

**JAKE:** I'm gonna get paid?!

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

**JAKE:** That would be swell!

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

**JAKE:** Well...

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

**JAKE:** Why are you helping me out like this?

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

*EXT. SIDE STREET IN THE HOLLYWOOD HILLS - NEAR DUSK*

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

**HARRY:** How long ya plannin' to stay in town?

Jake looks troubled.

**JAKE:** I came here to find my fortune.

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

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

**JAKE** (stubborn): Well, I can't go back to St. Louis.

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

**HARRY:** My little shack is over yonder.

Harry points out a medium-sized stone mansion, vaguely medieval, and largely overgrown with vines and weeds.
JAKE: You live here?
HARRY: No place like home.
JAKE: This place looks haunted.
HARRY: Nah, the ghosts all left. Couldn't stand my snoring.
JAKE: It still looks creepy.
HARRY (fake sincerity): But it's real comfy inside.

INT. HARRY'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Jake and Harry enter the front door... as they do, Harry notices that the area around the lock looks slightly blackened.
HARRY (continuing, mumbling): So! He knows...
JAKE: What?
HARRY: Oh, nuthin'. C'mere, I wantcha to meet someone.

Harry pulls Jake into a large room whose walls are lined with books, ancient tomes, from the floor to eight feet up. A stuffed alligator hangs from the high ceiling, and the furniture is draped with sheets. In the middle of the room, standing on a wooden perch and facing away from Harry and Jake, is a stuffed OWL. Or is it? A deep voice booms from the general direction of this owl.
SOCRATES: Harry, what have you dragged in this time?
JAKE (frightened): Wh-hoo-hoo said that?

The owl's head swivels to face Harry.
SOCRATES: Is he making fun of me?

Harry leads Jake over to the perch.
HARRY: Jake, I'd like ya to meet Socrates. He's older than dirt.
JAKE: This bird talks?
SOCRATES (drily): I was about to ask the same question about you, buster. (pause, offended) And Harry... you can lose those wisecracks about my age.
HARRY: Sorry, old timer. Wouldja tell Jake the story about that king ya used to hang out with?
SOCRATES: You mean the kid who pulled the sword from the stone?
HARRY: That's the one.
JAKE: He knew Arthur?
SOCRATES: I know all the biggies, kid. Let me tell you about the wizard who introduced me and Artie...

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

INT. HARRY'S KITCHEN - TWO HOURS LATER

Jake wipes his mouth with a napkin, and Harry smokes a cigar, his fedora pushed back. Socrates grooms his feathers, while sitting on a perch next to the table.
JAKE: You're quite a cook, Harry.
SOCRATES: And my rodent al dente was done to a "T". What kind was it?
HARRY: Rat. I got it outta one of the basement traps.

SOCRATES: I don't know what it is... but lately the cellar rats are more succulent than usual.
HARRY: I'm glad everybody's full. Jake, are ya ready for one more performance?
JAKE: We're going back out on the streets?
HARRY: Nah... I want you to see the Magic Castle.
JAKE: What's that?
HARRY: A private club for magicians. I do a gig over there once in awhile.
SOCRATES: That's where he shows his real stuff.

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

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

CONNIE (softly): If you're going onstage tonight, you'd better get dressed. We're almost ready to start.

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

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

JAKE: And you probably see a lot of them...

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

JAKE: It must be fascinating work.

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

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

CONNIE (continuing): See? This is the Amazing Crisco's idea of humor.

JAKE (chuckling): It is kind of funny...

CONNIE: Not if you're allergic to nylon.

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

JAKE: Let me untie yours for you.

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

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

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

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

JAKE: Where's that?

CONNIE: Right over there.

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

CONNIE: It's the black nail upstage.

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

JAKE: Okay, this works. What else?

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

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

INT. PALACE OF MYSTERY - FORTY MINUTES LATER

Harry stands on the small stage, winding up his act. He's in a tuxedo, but still wears his fedora; beside him is a large, person-sized box.
HARRY: ...I need a fresh victim, ah, a new volunteer. Madame, would you be so kind as to help me out?

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

TERRY: How can I help?

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

Terry's embarrassed, and the AUDIENCE giggles.

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

TERRY: Terry.

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

INT. PALACE OF MYSTERY, BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

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

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

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

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

JAKE (disillusioned): And his act was going so well...

CONNIE: At least I'll do his smoke...

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

ANGLE ON AUDIENCE

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

ANGLE ON BACKSTAGE

Jake and Connie dread what they will see.

ANGLE ON HARRY

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

INT. HARRY'S MANSION - ONE HOUR LATER

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

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

SOCRATES (bristling): I'll have you know that I am not just some empty-headed chatterbox...

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

JAKE: Why?

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

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

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

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

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

JAKE (awed): You really are a wizard...

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

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

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

HARRY: You gotta say it with feeling.

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

JAKE: But what about the couch?

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

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

EXT. MAGIC CASTLE - THE NEXT MORNING

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

INT. MAGIC CASTLE - TRAVELING - CONTINUOUS

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

HARRY: Here's a good place for you to wait.

JAKE: Where are you going?

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

JAKE: Should I stay at your house?

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

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

JAKE: When's your trip?

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

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

JAKE (delighted): Hi!

CONNIE (the feeling's mutual): Hi! (whispers) Did you find out how Harry did it?

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

CONNIE (skeptical): You're kidding. He did that, too?

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

CONNIE (laughing): Now that's a hoot!

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

CONNIE (scoffing): Come on, Jake, these books were donated by over a hundred practicing magicians.
JAKE: If you don't believe me, you should come over. He'll be gone tomorrow, and I can introduce you to Socrates.

CONNIE: Socrates?!
JAKE: ...the talking owl. He looks a lot like that one back in the entryway.

CONNIE (incredulous): Jake...!

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

HARRY: Harry, do you know Connie?

CONNIE: Not that you need any set up...

Harry smiles a secret smile.

JAKE: Did you make your travel plans?

Harry makes an exaggerated effort to ensure Connie hears:

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

CONNIE: You're going to the Arcana conference, then?

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

INT. HARRY'S MANSION - THE NEXT DAY

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

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

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

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

The owl blinks at Connie from his perch.

CONNIE: He doesn't chatter much for a talking owl.

SOCRATES (drily): And you chatter quite a bit for a perfect girl.

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

JAKE (mumbles): Socrates, give me a break...

CONNIE (recovering): So there really is an owl named Socrates...

SOCRATES (mimicking): So there really is a girl named Connie...

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

Jake shows her the bookcases full of magic texts.

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

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

CONNIE: There's a levitation spell in here?

JAKE: Yeah. He made me try it two nights ago.

CONNIE: How did you do?

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

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

JAKE: I tried this morning, and nothing happened.

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

JAKE: I could never do real magic.
CONNIE (softly): I believe you could.
JAKE: You do?
CONNIE: Sure... now, where's that spell?
    Jake takes the book, and flips through the pages.
JAKE: This is the one Harry used.
CONNIE: Try it.
    Jake looks uncertainly at her; she has a strange glint in her eye. Jake slowly
CHANTS the unusual words; Connie rises five feet in the air, and lies there horizontally.
Her mouth drops open, Jake's mouth drops open, and Socrates looks appalled.
SOCRATES: Now you've done it.
CONNIE: He certainly has! Jake, come over here.
    Jake walks nearer; Connie takes his head in her hands and kisses him tenderly. Jake
is slightly stunned, and looks blankly around.
JAKE: Maybe I should try again, and see if that was a fluke.
SOCRATES (deadpan): Fabulous idea.
    Jake CHANTS the words slightly quicker, and... he floats up beside Connie. They
LAUGH and nervously hug each other. In the clinch, Jake drops the book.
JAKE: Uh oh.
    Both make comical, but futile, swiping motions at the floor; their bodies remain at
the five-foot level.
CONNIE: Does this mean we can't get down?
JAKE: Let me see if I can remember what Harry said to lower the couch.
    Jake tries a series of CHANTS, changing one phrase at a time, but nothing is
working. At one point, the couch rises up to their level.
CONNIE (giggling): Looks like you have the levitation spell down pat.
    Jake frowns, and tries a few more CHANTS. On the third one, Socrates and his
perch float up into the upper reaches of the room.
SOCRATES (giving up): This is sublime.
JAKE (hopefully): Maybe the spell will wear off.
SOCRATES: Harry once had all of the furniture up for a week, while he cleaned and
dried the carpet.
    Connie and Jake look helplessly at each other, then decide to make the best of it.
CONNIE: Maybe we can move around by flapping against the air.
SOCRATES (ironic): Novel technique.
    Connie tries a swimming motion, and starts moving toward the kitchen.
CONNIE: All right!! This works! Jake, I'll get us all some food, and you keep trying to
remember the reverse spell.
EXT. HARRY'S MANSION - THAT NIGHT
    Harry hurries up the walk, his fedora jammed down tight. In the picture window,
Connie and Jake perform a water ballet in mid-air. They swoop, turn, do somersaults, and
wind up in a dreamy kiss. Harry smiles to himself, and opens the door.
INT. HARRY'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS
    Connie and Jake are oblivious to Harry's entrance; they're still locked at the lips.
Almost every object that is not nailed down is floating in mid-air with them.
HARRY: Ahem!
Jake and Connie hurriedly break their embrace. They both go spinning across the room... Connie runs into the floating couch, and Jake bumps into Socrates, causing an explosion of owl feathers. Connie regains her poise first:

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

**HARRY**: I can see that...

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

**JAKE**: And I've been practicing.

**HARRY**: No kiddin'.

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

**SOCRATES**: Harry, would you mind getting me back down?

**HARRY**: Logged enough flight time today, have ya?

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

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

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

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

**JAKE**: What do you mean... after today?

**HARRY**: There was some pretty heavy-duty sorcery at Arcana...

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

**JAKE**: Harry, I hate to bring this up...

**HARRY**: What's eatin' ya?

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

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

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

**JAKE**: So what is it that I have to learn?

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

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

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

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

**EXT. HARRY'S BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS**

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

**JAKE**: What's this all about?

**HARRY**: You hafta learn telekinesis.

**JAKE**: Tella whatsis?

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

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

**JAKE**: Harry?

**HARRY (O.S.)**: Over here, Jake.

Harry is standing by the gazebo, in the far corner of the yard. He CHANTS a phrase, almost inaudibly, and Jake disappears.
Jake appears suddenly next to Harry, with a loud POP.

**JAKE** (confused): What happened?

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

**JAKE**: Hey, that's pretty neat...

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

**ANGLE ON HARRY'S MANSION**

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

**ANGLE ON HARRY AND JAKE**

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

**JAKE** (continuing): Connie!

**HARRY**: Connie, and my old friend Socrates...

**JAKE** (in a rage): Who did this?

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

**JAKE** (stubborn): We should stay and fight.

**HARRY**: If we don't scram in ten seconds, we'll be mincemeat.

**JAKE**: Let's go!

Harry quickly **CHANTS** a spell.

**EXT. DESERT - CONTINUOUS**

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

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

**JAKE**: Where are we?

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

**JAKE**: The wind is the only sound...

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

After fifteen or twenty seconds, Jake looks puzzled:

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

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

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

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

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

**JAKE** (sniffling): So it was that Laszlo guy?
HARRY: Yeah, he's been doggin' my tracks for too long. He's lookin' for a tussle, and I'm gonna give him one. (pause) But he's a mighty powerful wizard... I'm gonna need your help.

JAKE (fiercely): After what he did to Connie, you can count on me.

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

They head toward Uncle Ralph's shack.

INT. UNCLE RALPH'S CABIN - NEXT MORNING

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

JAKE: Did you do that?

HARRY (mumbles sleepily): Musta been the wind.

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

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

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

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

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

Harry hunches his body, mimicking the nearest tree.

JAKE: So this is Ralph's cabin?

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

JAKE (kidding): When does my first lesson start, oh great Merlinsky?

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

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

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

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

ANGLE ON RAT AND SNAKE

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

JAKE: What was that all about? He nearly got me!

HARRY (matter of fact): That's just a taste of what's to come. And it was today's first lesson.

JAKE (still angry): And just what was the lesson?

Harry goes nose to nose with Jake.

HARRY: When you're dealin' with a wizard, never get reckless.
Harry turns to walk away, and Jake CHANTS a phrase. Harry rises into the air, looking startled. He looks back at Jake, and for a moment, two strong wills clash. After an instant, the tension passes, and they both break up LAUGHING.

EXT. YUCCA FLATS - DUSK

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

HARRY: Yucca Flats... my kinda town.

JAKE: What a name!

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

Harry elbows Jake, who looks distressed.

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

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

JAKE (looking around): There's another wizard out here?

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

JAKE: So where are we going now?

HARRY: To go play detective.

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

HARRY (continuing): Nice work so far. You're a natural gumshoe.

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

EXT. SIDEWINDER SALOON - THIRTY SECONDS LATER

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

JAKE (dubious): You're going in here?

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

Harry pulls Jake in the door.

INT. SIDEWINDER SALOON - CONTINUOUS

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

SNAKE: Harry, how the hell are ya?

HARRY: Snake, you old reptile!

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

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

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

Harry rubs his posterior ruefully, then motions for Jake to come over.
HARRY (continuing): Snake, I'd like ya to meet Jake.

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

HARRY: I'm looking fer Annie.

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

HARRY: How 'bout a beer and a sarsaparilla?

SNAKE: Coming right up.

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

HARRY: Jake, ya never told me the reason you left St. Looey.

JAKE (evading): It's no big deal.

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

JAKE (hesitates): ...no...

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

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

HARRY: Raised by yer mom?

JAKE: Just leave it alone, Harry.

HARRY: But Jake...

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

Harry follows Jake outside.

EXT. SIDEWINDER SALOON - CONTINUOUS

HARRY (continuing): Jake, I'm sorry. I'll back off. Can ya forgive me?

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

HARRY (continuing): Annie!

ANNIE: Harry, it's been such a long time!

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

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

JAKE: It's a pleasure, ma'm.

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

ANNIE: Am I interrupting something?

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

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

INT. SIDEWINDER SALOON - FIVE MINUTES LATER

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

ANNIE: So you're in danger...

HARRY: Deep shit, Annie.

ANNIE: Laszlo has found you again.

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

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

ANNIE: May I touch your palm?

Jake reluctantly holds out his hand. Annie takes it, and closes her eyes.
ANNIE (continuing): This young man could be your key, Harry. Teach him all you know.
HARRY: I intend to.

Annie opens her eyes, and releases Jake's hand.
ANNIE: Jake, your mother sends her best wishes...
JAKE (wide awake): Mom?
ANNIE: ...and she says not to blame your father too much. He just can't drink. She sounds like she's happy now.
JAKE (flabbergasted): What?

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

Annie cocks her head, listening for... what? Nothing seems amiss.
ANNIE (continuing): I've got to go now, but remember, Jake... don't dwell on revenge.

On her way out, Annie pauses to whisper to Harry:
ANNIE (continuing): This one will perform great deeds.
HARRY: I know. Take care, Annie.

EXT. HILLS OUTSIDE YUCCA FLATS - THIRTY MINUTES LATER

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

HARRY: If ya ever run across Annie again, she's one ya can trust.
JAKE: She's the wizard you were talking about?
HARRY: One and the same. Her powers run more toward seein' the future, rather than movin' things around.

JAKE: So there are different varieties of wizard?
HARRY: Yeah. I knew one guy, a long time ago, who could move through time. Backwards, forwards, sideways... you name the year, he could getcha there.
JAKE: Did you ever travel with him?
HARRY: When I came here. Laszlo can do it, too, fer short jumps. That's how he tracked me down.

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

BIFF: Hand over your money!

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

BIFF: Where's your wallet?

HARRY: The usual, dimwit.

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

JAKE: Harry, do the whatsis...

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

BIFF: Shaddup, the both of ya. One more time, smartmouth, where's your cash?
HARRY: My hip pocket, jerkface!

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

JAKE: Harry, can I try something?

HARRY (gasping): Give it yer best shot.

Jake CHANTS the now-familiar phrase, and everybody starts floating. In the confusion, the men release Jake and Harry.
BIFF: What the heck...?

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

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

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

EXT. UNCLE RALPH'S CABIN - NEXT MORNING

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

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

Harry studies the beer in his hand.

HARRY (continuing): ...or somethin'...

Jake sits down in the sand next to the chaise.

JAKE: How are you feeling?

HARRY (lopsided grin): Top of the heap!

JAKE: Were you serious last night?

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

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

HARRY: Yeah, I don't perform well under pressure.

JAKE: But it didn't seem to affect me.

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

Jake doodles in the sand for a few seconds.

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

HARRY (worried): You sure ya looked in the right spot?

Jake holds up a small white card.

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

Harry stands up, and starts pacing nervously.

HARRY: We gotta be on the lookout. Looks like Uri joined our little squabbling.

JAKE: Uri is the wizard you don't trust?

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

JAKE: What harm can he do?

Harry swirls on Jake.

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

Jake slumps, then waves toward the cabin.

JAKE: Another exploding house?

HARRY: Or worse.

A shadow drifts over the scene, and a FLAPPING of wings on the top of the cabin heralds the arrival of a large bird. A deep, familiar voice calls down:
SOCRATES: This is quite the dismal homecoming. Are you two going to mope around all day?
HARRY: Socrates! Yer a sight for sore eyes!
SOCRATES: Your alliteration is touching... however, all I want to know is: how did your eyes become sore?
JAKE: It's just his way of saying we're awfully glad to see you, Socrates!
SOCRATES: Nice area you picked out. I sampled a few of those delicious hopping rats on my flight out... their necks break with such a satisfying "snap"...
   Jake rubs his neck and eyes Harry.
JAKE (gingerly): Socrates, could you possibly hunt some other animals for awhile?
HARRY: Jake, I'm not gonna change ya into anything Socrates might chow down on. (pause) Socrates, tell me... how did ya get out of the house back in Hollywood?
SOCRATES: When I heard you were teaching Jake a survival skill, I concluded it might be informative to observe...
HARRY: ...so ya flew out the door behind us.
SOCRATES: Precisely.
JAKE (hopefully): Did Connie follow you?
SOCRATES: I'm afraid not. She was engrossed in a book when I left.
JAKE: So she's really gone...
   Jake wanders away, disconsolate. Harry glances up at Socrates and shrugs his shoulders.

EXT. LOST HORSE MINE - LATER THAT DAY
   Jake climbs a slight hill to the mine entrance... there are some dilapidated, rickety buildings on the hill, housing old, rusted mining machinery. Socrates glides over and alights on the corner of the building nearest the tunnel mouth.
SOCRATES: I wouldn't go in, if I were you.
JAKE: Harry said his uncle mined for gold down there. Maybe a few nuggets are still lying around.
   Jake walks in the mine.
SOCRATES (sighing, to himself): Kids these days... (to Jake) Wait for me!
   Socrates flies in the tunnel and lands on Jake's shoulder.
JAKE: Why are you coming?
SOCRATES: I can't let you go in here by yourself. Besides, my hearing is better than yours. I can tell if any of the timbers are giving way.
   Jake takes a flashlight out of his pocket, and turns it on. The mine has seen better days... minor dirt slides partially block the tunnel every ten feet or so.
JAKE: This is a great old place!
SOCRATES: If you're looking for the latest in a tomb...
   Socrates flies on ahead, and perches on a shoring timber.
JAKE: Your night vision is better than mine... do you see anything shiny?
SOCRATES: As long as you persist in flashing that light in my eyes, everything looks shiny.
   Socrates' eyes bug out slightly, and seem to spin. His timber CREAKS... Socrates FLAPS over to Jake's shoulder, and shivers.
JAKE: I wonder how far down this goes?
SOCRATES (sarcastic): Since you have to know, shall I go and find out for you?
JAKE: That's a thought! You could fly down and not disturb anything!

The timber CREAKS again.

SOCRATES: All right. Two things you must promise me.

JAKE: What are they?

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

Jake hesitates for a second, then nods.

SOCRATES (continuing): ...and second, do not touch that timber while I'm gone.

JAKE: You've got a deal.

ANGLE TOWARD THE MOUTH OF THE TUNNEL

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

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

JAKE (continuing): What the heck...?

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

JAKE (continuing): Oh, no...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INT. MINE SHAFT - CONTINUOUS

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

JAKE (continuing): Socrates?

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

INT. MINE SHAFT, FURTHER DOWN - CONTINUOUS

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

JAKE (continuing): Socrates?

As Jake and the pile of dirt slide, a timber SNAPS, and another CAVE IN starts. Jake CHANTS and POPS out again.
INT. MINE SHAFT, WAY DOWN - CONTINUOUS

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

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

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

JAKE: Well... here?

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

EXT. MINE ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

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

SOCRATES (garbled): Hold out your hand.

JAKE: What?

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

SOCRATES: I picked you up a souvenir.

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

EXT. CACTUS PATCH - MORNING

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

JAKE: Last one's a rotten egg!

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

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

JAKE: I guess I did say rotten egg...

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

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

JAKE: It went right through my sneaker!

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

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

JAKE: Right here...

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

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

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

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

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

HARRY (smirking): Try it.

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

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

HARRY (chortles): Ya just ran smack up against one of the loco side effects of time hoppin'!

JAKE: You mean the contradiction part of it?

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

JAKE: Oh?

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

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

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

HARRY: You mean the contradiction part of it?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EXT. VACANT LOT, INDIO - CONTINUOUS

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

JAKE: What now?

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

JAKE: I'll give it a shot.

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

EXT. DESERT, INDIO - CONTINUOUS

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

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

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

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

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

EXT. VACANT LOT, INDIO - CONTINUOUS
The shadows are different, but the butterflies are the same; a cloud of them disperse as Jake and Harry appear.

JAKE: We got back to the future!

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

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

HARRY (continuing): Looks like we're a week early.

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

GROCER: That's last week's edition... the new ones came out this morning!

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

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - A HALF-HOUR LATER

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

EXT. OSTRICH CORRAL - CONTINUOUS

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

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS BLEACHERS - CONTINUOUS

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

ANNOUNCER (O.S.): Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to welcome you to the Indio Date Festival Ostrich Derby!

The crowd CHEERS.

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

ANGLE ON FAIRGROUNDS TRACK

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

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (continuing): Ostriches do have wings, but they cannot fly more than a few feet. Although it looks like they're trying to prove me wrong today...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HARRY'S P.O.V.

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

HARRY'S P.O.V.

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

EXT. VACANT LOT, INDIAN - TEN MINUTES LATER

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

EXT. DESERT CACTUS PATCH - CONTINUOUS

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

JAKE: Stop yelling, and "watch where yer goin""!!

HARRY: Ouch! I deserve that...

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

JAKE: So who was that guy?

HARRY: I didn't stop to get a crystal clear view, but it looked like Laszlo.
JAKE: Do you think he's on our trail?
HARRY: I doubt it, but I didn't wanna take any chances. Laszlo thinks he finished us off, back in Hollywood.

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

JAKE: Let's see... a little less than thirteen days...
HARRY: Make sure ya get the right one... I don't wanna end up on a Buck Rogers spaceship...

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

EXT. SAME DESERT SCENE, MORNING SHADOWS - CONTINUOUS

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

HARRY (continuing): Looks like you hit it right on the nose, pardner... there's two of you and one of me, over there.

JAKE: This time travel is really confusing.
HARRY: I don't know if we'll have much room in Uncle Ralph's shack tonight...

JAKE: What do you mean?

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

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

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

JAKE: They'll see us... we'll see us...
HARRY: Wait a minute, let's think this through...

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

HARRY (continuing): I think this is our cue...

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

JAKE'S VOICE (O.S.): What's going on behind that rock?
HARRY'S VOICE (O.S.): It's probably just us, comin' back. C'mon, let's go!

Behind the rock, Harry beckons to Jake.

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

INT. HOLLYWOOD WAX MUSEUM - DAYS LATER

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

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

The girl moves on, and we DOLLY to follow her... she moves to the Mae West display. Mae's wax replica wears a provocatively gaudy gown, and stands in an old-time saloon.
The girl walks away, after a minute, and a mustachioed MAN, wearing a homburg, follows her.

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

MAN: He was a magician like no other...

ANGLE ON GIRL AND MAN

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

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

MAN: Once?

CONNIE (suddenly evasive): Once.

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

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

CONNIE (reading the card): I've heard of you... and I'll be the stage manager at your show.

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

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

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

MAN (cryptically): Have you ever seen magic without tricks?

CONNIE (noncommittal): Once.

MAN: How about this?

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

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

MAN: Whatever happened to my friend Harry?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ANGLE ON BUSINESS CARD

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

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

JAKE: Where are we going today?

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

JAKE: It looks more like a mountain than a canyon.

HARRY: Wait'll we get up on top.

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

JAKE: Guess I'm not much good at this.

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

JAKE: That sounds like a quote.

HARRY (thoughtful): Yeah, I thought a lot of the guy who first got me up on the rock face.

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

JAKE (gasping): So who was this guy?

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

JAKE: And he taught you about climbing?

HARRY: He taught me everything I know.

JAKE: Magic?

HARRY: And how to live a good life.

JAKE: Sounds like quite a guy.

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

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

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

JAKE: Thanks... you saved my life.

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

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

JAKE: How come he changed?

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

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

JAKE: So...?

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

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

JAKE (marveling): You tutored King Arthur!

JAKE and Harry climb a bit more.

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

JAKE: What about Herbie?

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

JAKE: I've heard this story... it was his illegitimate son, wasn't it?

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

JAKE: So he was behind Mordred?

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

JAKE: But you never found out why Laszlo is after you?

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

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

JAKE: Harry... hang on!

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

HARRY: Ain't this fun!?

INT. MAGIC CASTLE "PALACE OF MYSTERY" - CONTINUOUS

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

LASZLO: You said Harry Merlinsky died in an explosion?

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

LASZLO: How's that?
CONNIE: Harry took his apprentice, Jake, out in the back yard to teach him a new trick, just when I realized I was very late for work. I rushed off, without even saying goodbye. When I was halfway down the street, the house blew up.
LASZLO: Did they ever figure out the cause?
CONNIE: Not that I know of.
Laszlo turns away from Connie and smiles.
LASZLO: Harry and I were the best of friends. I'm sorry to see him go.
CONNIE checks some lights, while Laszlo drags a large trick box to the middle of the stage.
CONNIE: How did you meet him?
LASZLO: I was his teacher... he learned all he knew about magic from me.
CONNIE: You must have been a good instructor... he was passing on some of his knowledge to Jake.
Still with his back to Connie, Laszlo looks alarmed, but regains his composure quickly.
LASZLO: Was he studying real magic?
CONNIE: Yes. Jake was a fast learner.
LASZLO: You know, Connie, something tells me that Harry and Jake may have escaped that explosion.
CONNIE (suspicious): What do you mean?
LASZLO: When I was out at the Date Festival a couple of weeks ago, I caught a glimpse of someone who looked like Harry. That fedora of his is hard to miss. There was a young boy, freckles and dark hair, with him... a boy about your age.
CONNIE (excited): That sounds like Jake!
LASZLO: They left before I could talk to them... do you think Harry might have a place out in the desert?
CONNIE: Not that I know of.
Laszlo sets up a small stuffed animal in the middle of the stage and turns to Connie.
LASZLO: I've got a stunt that's quite an eye-catcher... it's sort of my signature trick. Tell me what you think of this.
Laszlo SNAPS his fingers, and points at the animal. After a bright flash of light, the whole scene turns negative. The stuffed animal disappears, leaving only a small, faintly-smoking pile of ash. Connie's eyes widen, and her mouth forms a small "o".
CONNIE: I think I've seen that trick before.
LASZLO (menacing): Would you help me check the hinges on this box, Connie?
Connie backs away from him, frightened.
CONNIE: I've got to get some props... out back...
Laszlo steps toward her and follows her, step for step.
LASZLO: You don't think I need your cooperation to get you into a box, do you?
He SNAPS his fingers and points at Connie; she disappears.
ANGLE ON THE BOX
Connie reappears, in the box, and the door SLAMS shut. Laszlo padlocks it.
CONNIE (O.S.): Let me out of here!
LASZLO: In due time, Connie. You've just become my bait for some much bigger fish!
Laszlo strides into the wings, backstage, picks up the house telephone, and dials.
LASZLO (continuing): Hello, Uri? You haven't by any chance seen Harry Merlinsky up around the desert, have you?
Laszlo listens for awhile, punctuating the other's conversation with sporadic "Hmmm"s and "Uh huh"s.
LASZLO (continuing): Three common thieves? Floating in mid-air? Uri, that sounds like Harry's handiwork. I'll send some men up there right away.
Laszlo hangs up and walks back over to the trick box. He SNAPS his fingers and points at it, making it rise a few inches off the ground. He maneuvers it backstage, placing it in a corner, against the wall.
LASZLO (continuing, chuckling): Connie, you just sit tight. The cavalry will be here in no time.
Laszlo walks away LAUGHING, while THUMPS shake the box.

EXT. HIDDEN CANYON - CONTINUOUS
Harry and Jake stand on top of the enormous pile of monoliths they've just climbed, and survey the view; it's a two-square mile area, completely surrounded by piles of huge stones.
HARRY: Now you can see why they call it Hidden Canyon.
JAKE: It's almost like some giant decided to barricade his front yard with these huge rocks!
HARRY: Over there's a secret entrance. Cattle rustlers used to drive a herd in here, one steer at a time, and wait for the heat to die down.
JAKE: This is a great place!
HARRY: Yep. (looking down) I don't wanna go down the same way we came up. Lemme show ya the quick way.

Harry throws a loop of rope around a tall rock outcropping, wraps the rope around his waist, and rappels briskly down, inside the canyon. Jake looks doubtful, but gamely wraps the rope around himself, and starts down the cliff. By the time he's half-way down, he's having the time of his life. When he arrives beside Harry, he hands over the rope, and Harry quickly flips it, so that it slides off the outcropping at the top of the cliff.
JAKE: Yikes! If I'd know it came off that easily, I'd never have tried this.
HARRY: That's why I didn't show ya beforehand. (pause) C'mon, let's go see Skull Rock.

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

EXT. SKULL ROCK - THIRTY MINUTES LATER
A twenty-five foot tall monolith has been sculpted by sand, wind and heat, until it vaguely resembles a death's-head. Jake and Harry stare back at the unseeing eye sockets in silence. Jake is getting more and more uncomfortable.
JAKE: It reminds me of my mother.
Harry is surprised, but he doesn't push it.
HARRY: Oh?

JAKE (flat): My father was drinking, when he picked her up at work. (pause) She scrubbed floors at night. (pause) My father escaped the car wreck without a scratch. (pause) He never went to see her in the hospital. (pause) I watched her waste away from internal injuries. (pause) Her face was like that, when she died.
Harry puts his arm around Jake's shoulders. They stand in silence, staring up at the rock. Unseen by them, THREE MEN step out from behind another rock. TEX, JOE BOB and BILLY are unsavory-looking ranch hands.

TEX: Howdy, Harry. Long time, no see!

JAKE: Who are they?

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

TEX: How many survived, Tex?

HARRY: Just a few got lucky... your pansy magician friends cut 'em down.

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

HARRY: Jake!

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

TEX: Up to the same old tricks, I see.

HARRY: The boss?

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

HARRY: Connie? She died when Laszlo blew up my house.

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

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

JOE BOB: Tex, shoot this damn bird!

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

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

TEX: You can't get away with it. I got a gun, this time.

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

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

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

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

TEX: What the hell is this?
HARRY: You're a special guy, Tex... I thought you deserved macrame.
   Tex POPS out, too. Socrates flies over to Harry's shoulder.
HARRY (continuing, to Socrates): Nice work, old man.
SOCRATES: Knock off the age jokes, and see what's wrong with Jake.
   Harry kneels to examine the wound, just as Jake comes to.
JAKE: What happened? Who's the other owl with you, Socrates? And how come there
   are two of you, Harry? You been time traveling without me?
HARRY: I think you got a mild concussion, Jake. Let's head back to the shack.
INT. UNCLE RALPH'S CABIN - HALF-HOUR LATER
   Jake's head is bandaged, and both he and Harry look spiffy in tuxedos.
JAKE: Okay, we're all dressed up. Where do we go?
HARRY: To the Magic Castle... but we have one stop in the past, if you feel up to gettin'
   us there.
JAKE: Where to... I mean when to?
   Harry checks a calendar on the wall, counting up days.
HARRY: Lessee, we've been out here in the desert just under six weeks... (pause) Ya
   hafta promise me you won't say anything when we get there... I don't wanna interfere
   with the past this time... it's too tricky.
JAKE: Alright.
HARRY (insisting): ...no matter what ya see...
JAKE: Okay! Okay!
HARRY: Let's try the time and distance hops together... you take us back exactly forty
   days, and I'll handle the location.
   Harry and Jake CHANT their different chants simultaneously; they start to fade out
   of the scene, then POP... they're gone.
EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF HARRY'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS
   Harry and Jake POP into the street, and rush to hide in back of a large oak tree, just
   as another Harry (#2) walks up to the front door. Through the window, Connie and
   another Jake (#2) can be seen doing their aerial ballet.
JAKE: It's not enough that I get my head busted open... you're going to make me watch
   Connie get blown to bits again?
HARRY: Shh! This is when ya gotta keep yer yap shut.
JAKE (softly): Connie!
   Harry claps his hand over Jake's mouth... Connie has walked out of the front door,
   and runs down the street with a book under her arm.
HARRY (whispering): So... she did get out... and she borrowed one of the books. I hope
   she puts it to good use...
   The mansion IMPLODES, as before, and the bright light turns negative. Harry
   MUMBLES, and he and Jake POP out of the scene.
EXT. MAGIC CASTLE - CONTINUOUS
   Harry and Jake POP into the parking lot. The flash of the implosion is dying down.
   Harry takes his hand off Jake's mouth.
JAKE: Connie's alive?!
HARRY: Yup. While you were unconscious, Tex spilled the beans... Laszlo has her in
   the Castle.
   Jake turns toward the building entrance, but Harry restrains him.
HARRY (continuing): Not now, Jake... forty days from now.
   Jake CHANTS before Harry can stop him. They fade out.

EXT. MAGIC CASTLE - CONTINUOUS
   Harry and Jake fade back in. There's a different set of cars in the parking lot.

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

JAKE (contrite): Ooops.

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

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

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

INT. PALACE OF MYSTERY - THIRTY MINUTES LATER

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

JAKE: We've been all over the Castle... where do you think she is?

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

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

JAKE: I thought she might be in there.

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

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

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

ANGLE ON BACKSTAGE

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

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

   Laszlo strides offstage, without another backwards glance.

INT. MAGIC CASTLE, HOUDINI ROOM - CONTINUOUS

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

JAKE: Whew! That was close!

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

JAKE (continuing): Hey, this is Houdini's door knocker!

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

JAKE (continuing): I really didn't get a good look at Laszlo.

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

HARRY: Looks like you'll get a close up view... here he comes, across the dining room.
Harry stands behind the door, and pulls Laszlo's jacket down over his arms, as he walks through the door. Harry keeps a hold on Laszlo from behind.

**LASZLO** (venomous): Harry! So nice to see you again!

**HARRY** (furiously): Spill it... why d'ya still wanna hot-flash barbecue me?

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

**HARRY**: Don't butter me up, sport.

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

**HARRY**: We made out okay.

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

**HARRY**: Morgan? She was a free spirit... and a hell of a sorcerer.

**LASZLO**: I was quite smitten with her.

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

**LASZLO** (angry): She was teaching me the Old Knowledge, and you distracted her from that.

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

**LASZLO** (self-righteous): Mordred did his duty.

**HARRY** (hurt): And why didn't you do yours? I was your apprentice, and you turned on me.

**LASZLO** (bored): You hampered my plans, Harry. And you're still in my way.

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

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

**LASZLO** (continuing): He always thought he was superior to everybody. Maybe he could learn faster... but he's not better than me anymore!

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

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

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

**EXT. SIDEWINDER SALOON - CONTINUOUS**

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

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

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

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

JAKE'S P.O.V.

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

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

ANGLE ON JAKE

Jake sits up suddenly, eyes wide, and GROANS. Annie enters the room with a wet rag, and blots Jake's forehead.

JAKE (muddled): How did I get back here?

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

JAKE: Am I safe here?

ANNIE: What did Harry say about me?

JAKE: He said I could trust you.

ANNIE: So trust me, already.

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

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

JAKE (anxious): I've got to warn them not to go back to the Magic Castle!

ANNIE: There's plenty of time for all that.

JAKE (fading): Connie walked in... I've got to go back to save her...

ANNIE: But first, you need some rest.

INT. ANNIE'S COTTAGE - THAT EVENING

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

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

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

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

JAKE: I wish I could.

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

JAKE (impatient): I should be doing something right now... warning Harry, fighting Laszlo, rescuing Connie...

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

JAKE: Shaping my destiny...?

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

JAKE (appalled): No way.

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

JAKE: But he kills everything in his way!

ANNIE: And if you kill him, you become like him.

JAKE (taken aback): Oh.

ANNIE: Something else to think about is your activating mechanism.
JAKE: My what?
ANNIE: Harry taught you the classic method, with chanting, but Laszlo employs a snap and a point. You can turn that in your favor.
JAKE: That's right... I remember Harry used other ways... he once changed me into a rat with a nod.
   Jake nods, and POPS outside the back screen door.
JAKE (continuing): And he once shut the door to the cabin with a wrinkle of his nose...
   Jake wrinkles his nose from side to side, with MUSICAL SFX, and POPS back into the kitchen.
ANNIE: That's the idea!
JAKE: Whew! All of a sudden, I'm beat.
ANNIE: You're still healing... get a good night's sleep, and start fresh in the morning.
INT. ANNIE'S KITCHEN - DAYS LATER
   Jake's bandages are off, and his shirt is mended; only a slightly red forearm and a small pink scar over his eyebrow remind us of his ordeals. He reaches to get an apple out of the pantry, as Annie comes in the back door.
JAKE: Catch!
   Jake pitches the apple toward Annie, and it sails over her head. Another Jake (#2) materializes outside the door, catches the apple, and tosses it around the side of the cottage, to where another Jake (#3) is waiting. Jake #3 throws the apple out front, to a newly-appeared Jake #4.
   Jake #4 swivels to fire the apple to Jake #5, on the opposite side of the cottage from Jake #3. Jake #5 pretends to tag out a base runner before rifling the apple back to Jake #2, who is still standing outside the back door. Jake #2 gently tosses the apple up to Annie, who catches it and takes a bite out of it.
ANNIE: Who will remember Tinker to Evers to Chance, after they see Timmons to Timmons to Timmons?!
   Jake #1, standing by the pantry, winks and fades out of the scene. The only Jake remaining is #2, outside the back door.
JAKE: Annie, you've shown me how to do what I have to do, and I think I sense a departure soon.
ANNIE: So your precognition is finally starting to kick in...
JAKE: It's not completely clear, but I can see a little ways into the future.
ANNIE: That's all you need right now... it'll get stronger as you use it.
EXT. ANNIE'S COTTAGE - THAT NIGHT
   Jake is dressed in his newly-repaired tuxedo. Annie stands on her front step and gives him a kiss on the cheek.
JAKE: I can't thank you enough for all you've done.
ANNIE: If you can stop Laszlo, the whole sorcery community will thank you.
JAKE: Okay. I'm off. Wish me luck.
ANNIE: Godspeed.
   Jake nods, and POPS out of the scene.
INT. OUTSIDE THE HOUDINI ROOM - CONTINUOUS
   Jake POPS into the dining room, much to the surprise and delight of the DINERS seated at their meals. A flash of light and a ROAR come through the half-open door, startling the whole crowd. Jake reaches inside, and pulls Connie out.
CONNIE: Jake! But didn't Laszlo just... destroy you in there?
JAKE: Don't believe everything you see. He only winged me.

Laszlo looks around the door, seeing Connie and Jake, and SNAPS his fingers. Jake
nods; he and Connie POP out of the scene. Laszlo carries his finger oddly... it's obviously
loaded, and he wonders what to do with it. A querulous VOICE comes from a lady in the
dining room:
LADY (O.S.): I love the show, but this meat is too rare.

Laszlo pivots, and points his finger. A filet mignon flashes brightly, on the plate in
front of the surprised LADY, and her plate turns negative. She stares down at a pile of
ashes.
LASZLO (matter-of-fact): Not rare any more, is it, bitch?

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

INT. MAGIC CASTLE LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

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

CONNIE: I'm so glad you're safe!
JAKE: I spent a long time thinking you were dead... you've got to go hide somewhere, so
he can't get to you again.

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

INT. MAGIC CASTLE ANTEROOM "STUDY" - CONTINUOUS

Jake and Connie POP in, to the surprise of the HOSTESS, standing behind a
podium-console-desk construct. The hostess tries to take it in stride:
HOSTESS: Do you have reservations this evening?
JAKE (smiling): No, but I'd appreciate it if my... date... could temporarily hide behind
your desk.
HOSTESS: But...
JAKE: It's okay... we're with Merlinsky, and it's part of the performance.
HOSTESS: That explains it.

Jake ushers Connie behind the desk, over her protests:

CONNIE: Jake, this is not necessary...
JAKE: Connie, I just want you out of the line of fire. I'll be next door, in the bar.

He kisses Connie, and POPS out of existence.

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

INT. MAGIC CASTLE BAR - CONTINUOUS

Jake POPS in, leaning on the bar railing. He checks his tie in the mirror behind the
bar. The BARTENDER does a double-take:
BARTENDER (mutters) I've gotta get a job in a regular bar.
JAKE: If a guy in a homburg and mustache shows up, it might be wise to duck down
until the excitement is over.
BARTENDER: What kind of excitement are we talking about?

Jake nods and POPS out, just as a flash lights up the spot where he stood. The ROAR
and resulting negative lighting effects terrify the bartender. Jake POPS in at the other end
of the bar, and calls out:
JAKE: Something like that.
BARTENDER: Gotcha.
The bartender immediately ducks behind the bar. Laszlo slowly descends the grand staircase toward the bar, measuring his opponent.

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

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

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

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

Laszlo spins on his heel.

**LASZLO:** Laszlo... the name is Laszlo! A name you'll remember until the moment you die!

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

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

**LASZLO:** Laszlo... I said the name is Laszlo!

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

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

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

When no one appears, Jake leans over the bar.

**JAKE:** Are you okay?

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

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

Laszlo reappears beside Jake's unconscious body.

**LASZLO** (crisp): Not any more, I don't.

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

**CONNIE (O.S.):** You wouldn't kill a defenseless man, would you, Laszlo?

**ANGLE ON THE BAR**

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

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

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

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

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

JAKE: So you taught yourself telekinesis.
CONNIE: When I thought you and Harry were murdered, I swore I'd find whoever did it...
JAKE (weak chuckle): Just like me.
CONNIE: ...and I knew I'd need to protect myself.

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

JAKE: You protected us both.

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

SOCRATES: She saved us all, hotshot.
JAKE (surprised): Socrates?! But how...
SOCRATES (cross): I'm tired of you and Harry popping around to God-knows-where and who-knows-when, and leaving me behind.
JAKE: Socrates, I'm sorry to have to be the one to break this to you...
HARRY (O.S.): Nah, Jake, lemme break it to him.

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

HARRY (continuing): ...but what is it I gotta tell him?!

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

CONNIE: How did you ever survive?
HARRY: I took a page outta Jake's book... when things got toasty, I took off for Annie's.
JAKE: Did you get hurt?
HARRY: Laszlo fried my leg pretty good... but Annie's a top-drawer medic.
CONNIE: Harry, I haven't seen you in over a month, and I have something to return to you.

Connie picks up the book from the gazebo seat.

CONNIE (continuing): I borrowed this without asking... I hope you don't mind.
Harry indicates the wreckage of the mansion with a gesture.

HARRY: Mind? Ya did me a favor... ya saved my favorite book of spells.
Harry opens the book, and a slip of paper falls out. He picks it up, glances at it, and hands it to Connie.

HARRY (continuing): Looks like ya left some notes in here.

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

CONNIE: Harry... this was a message for you! About a week ago, there was a call for you at the Castle... (reading) ...a Morgan L. Fay wanted to meet you on the San Pedro breakwater at high tide on the vernal equinox.
HARRY (brightening): Morgan Le Fay is in town?! Hot dog! What's today? When's high tide? Let's get this show on the road!

HARRY SNAPS his fingers; he, Jake, Connie and Socrates all POP out of the backyard.

EXT. SAN PEDRO BREAKWATER - CONTINUOUS

Jake, Connie and Socrates POP in on the huge pile of rocks. Socrates winds up in mid-air, and has to FLAP his wings, to get himself over to Jake's shoulder.
SOCRATES: I keep telling him to give me some warning... (pause) ...but I guess it's better than being left behind.

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

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

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

JAKE, CONNIE & SOCRATES (wincing, in unison): No, thanks!

Harry looks at his watch.

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

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

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

HARRY (smiling): And you're just the guy to do it... sorry, fella!

CONNIE: What will you do from here, Harry?

HARRY: Morgan probably wants to take me to Avalon.

CONNIE (incredulous): You mean the mystical Celtic island of blessed souls?

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

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

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

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

JAKE, CONNIE & SOCRATES: (in unison): Nah!

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

HARRY: You guys wait for me here.

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

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

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

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

CONNIE (smiling): Of course.

They kiss.

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

CONNIE: A whole lot.

They kiss again, long and lingering.

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

CONNIE: Alright.

JAKE: Maybe you could come with me...

CONNIE: I'd like that.

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

HARRY: I think I'm going to Avalon.
Jake looks at Connie.

**JAKE:** And I think we're going to St. Louis.

Harry smiles broadly, and hugs them both.

**HARRY:** I wish you guys the best of luck.

**SOCRATES:** And may your cellar be full of rodents.

**HARRY** (scolding): Socrates, that's downright raunchy...

**SOCRATES** (arrogant): It's an old benediction, sacred in the annals of owl history.

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

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

**CONNIE:** Bye, guys!

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

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

**ANGLE ON THE BREAKWATER**

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

**THE END**

###

With industry-standard Cole/Haag formatting, this screenplay is 98 pages long. Additional scripts by this screenwriter may be found at: [http://9TimeZones.com/scr](http://9TimeZones.com/scr)

Alan C. Baird enjoys referring to himself in the third person. Born down east, he now lives just a stone's throw from Phoenix... which is fine and dandy, until the stones are thrown back.