

The Wizard's Cloak

A Comedy of Magic

By: Benjamin Cressey

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559 Nathan Abbott Way
Stanford, California 94305
USA

Cast of Characters

Magnacious	A wizard
Susie Wilkins	A young girl in high school
Lawrence Westwood	A police officer
Clark Robertson	A private detective
Woody Dixon	A young high school athlete
Carl Anderson	A rat salesman

[A wizard's shop. A large, very cluttered table dominates the rear of the stage. Visible on the table are assorted objects meant to suggest wizardry, or at the very least chemistry. To this end, a chemistry set and big vials of colored liquids would be ideal. Papers and arcane-seeming, open leather bound books strewn across the table would also be a nice touch. The table is on stage right.

Also towards the rear of stage left there stands an ornate birdcage containing a large white rat. Beside it there is a mid-sized statue of a woman. The statue should be as erotic/suggestive as is deemed appropriate for the audience, with a preference toward maximizing suggestiveness.

A wizard's staff is carefully propped against one of the side walls.

Two windows, one on each side of the set, are in the rear wall. Between them hangs a portrait. The portrait should bear very little resemblance to Magnacious, ideally none whatsoever.]

ACT I

Scene 1

[Scene opens with Magnacious standing to one side of the portrait, gazing intently at it. Magnacious should be lit with a narrow spotlight which illuminates him and little else.]

MAGNACIOUS

Mirror, mirror on the wall.

[Sound of timid knocking on the door. MAGNACIOUS looks up from his chanting and addresses the rat.]

Did you hear something, Corvus?

[Knocking grows more assertive.]

I sense your presence, mortal. Proceed into my keep, that we may speak of spells and sorceries.

[Sound of door opening. Enter SUSIE.]

SUSIE

Gosh, it's so dark in here.

MAGNACIOUS

Let there be light!

[Lights come up.]

Be not afraid, young one, for I am but a humble wizard, called Magnacious the Great by some, and Magnacious the Mighty and Nearly Omnipotent by others. More than a few simply refer to me as Magnacious the Supremely Wise.

SUSIE

Magnacious the... Benevolent?

MAGNACIOUS

Quite so, for tales of glorious gifts within my power to bestow are legendary. Indeed, we may safely suppose that such tales are the purpose of your visit here, the fabled storehouse of wisdom and repository of knowledge where I reside.

SUSIE

This is the strangest veterinarian's office I've ever been to.

MAGNACIOUS

I beg your pardon?

SUSIE

Well, look, Mr. Magnacious, my name's Susie Wilkins. I spoke to your receptionist earlier about Sparky, and she said just to come on down to the office and you'd have the pills waiting here for me. I haven't been here before, but Mom said it was easy to find. Except I think I made a wrong turn somewhere. Mom told me to take the bus, but it was such a beautiful day outside that I thought I'd just walk here. Anyways, it's getting pretty late and I need to get home, so if I could just have those pills...

MAGNACIOUS

Here you shall find no pills, young one, for this is no common apothecary. Long years have I trained under the master alchemists, and during my studies I have mastered the arcane rites necessary for creating potions and elixirs of fabulous substance and potent strength. I possess no common herbs or powders, yet among my wares you shall find cures for baldness, blindness and leprosy, to say nothing of those potions which have the power to heal wounds, restore physical vigor, promote fertility, and repair afflictions of the heart.

SUSIE

Afflictions of the heart... that sounds right. But I'm sure we got pills last time. And besides, I doubt I can even get Sparky to drink a potion. Dad said we'd have to hide the medicine in his dog food or he'd just refuse to take it.

MAGNACIOUS

Forgive me for interjecting, child, for though I know well that matters of the heart can be extraordinarily fickle, I assure you that someone as pretty as you can find a more desirable companion than this Sparky fellow. I urge you to consider whether you might perhaps be better off without him. You are still young; you will find another in time.

SUSIE

What?! But I love Sparky!

MAGNACIOUS

I know, dear, I know. I am merely suggesting that you need not settle for one who dines on the food of canines.

SUSIE

But Mom says it's bad to feed dogs people food.

MAGNACIOUS

Am I to understand that Sparky is a canine?

SUSIE

He's a golden retriever.

MAGNACIOUS

Perhaps I have misunderstood your request. Let me see. I suppose Sparky's been displaying all the classic symptoms: picking at his food, moping around the house, a lack of enthusiasm, restlessness...

SUSIE

He has been pretty down over the past few weeks.

MAGNACIOUS

Have you identified the little lady he has his eye on? Perhaps a neighborhood Chihuahua, or a cute little terrier from up the street? We must know the target of his affections before we can effectively treat his heartsickness.

SUSIE

I don't understand. He was already diagnosed with heartworms.

MAGNACIOUS

Heartworms?

SUSIE

Heartworms are filarial worms, transmitted by mosquitoes, which are parasitic in the heart and associated blood vessels of dogs and other members of the canine family.

MAGNACIOUS

I believe there has been some mistake.

SUSIE

This isn't the veterinarian's office, is it?

MAGNACIOUS

What a preposterous notion.

SUSIE

Well, there's no sign on the door!

MAGNACIOUS

Of course there is a sign, and a very splendid sign at that. "Ye Olde Magic Shoppe," it says, in beautiful archaic lettering...

SUSIE

I'm telling you, there's no sign outside.

MAGNACIOUS

[Addressing the rat]

Confound it! Those pesky street urchins must have made off with it again!

SUSIE

And in here I saw that rat over there, and I thought maybe...

MAGNACIOUS

Good heavens, Corvus, the child claims we've a rodent infestation.

SUSIE

Who are you talking to?

MAGNACIOUS

I was addressing my familiar, Corvus. He is a crow, gifted with powers of speech and intellect through an intricate spell of my own devising.

SUSIE

In that cage?

MAGNACIOUS

I prefer to regard it as his perch.

SUSIE

I don't see anything inside except that rat.

MAGNACIOUS

I should expect not. Your eyes are not yet open to magic, to the potential inherent in your surroundings. You see merely what you expect, and nothing more.

SUSIE

I don't understand. Are you telling me that's not a rat after all?

MAGNACIOUS

Corvus is no more a rat than you or I. That is not to disregard his potential of becoming a rat; we are merely noting that his potential to be a crow is currently being realized.

SUSIE

You aren't making any sense.

MAGNACIOUS

Magic is the art of maximizing the dormant possibilities around us to guide reality onto a more desirable path. I see you are still perplexed. Perhaps a demonstration is in order.

SUSIE

What sort of demonstration?

MAGNACIOUS

You shall see a display of the incredible power of magic, right before your very eyes. Be quite still, now. Ahem. ELLIPSO... FACTO... MAGICO!

[A cloud of smoke appears within the cage, momentarily hiding its contents from view. Enter STREET URCHINS, unnoticed. They seize the wizard's staff and exit.]

There you have it. Corvus, my dear companion, has now been utterly transformed.

SUSIE

But he's still a rat!

MAGNACIOUS

Naturally he's a rat. Were we not just speaking of his potential to become such a creature? I thought it the obvious choice when casting my transformation spell.

SUSIE

You can't really expect me to believe that this magic spell of yours actually did anything.

MAGNACIOUS

You are free to believe what you like, but I should think it perfectly undeniable that Corvus, who was a crow, is presently a rat.

SUSIE

He's always been a rat!

MAGNACIOUS

I count that as a sign of a truly first-rate transformation spell.

SUSIE

It wasn't a spell at all. It was just some stupid trick with a lot of smoke and some strange words.

MAGNACIOUS

Those are strong words indeed, coming from one who knows nothing of the magical arts.

SUSIE

I've seen better magic on television.

MAGNACIOUS

Have you really? Can you recall a single instance where a performance by a television magician left you convinced you had seen magic in action?

SUSIE

Of course not. It's all fake anyways. Everyone knows there's no such thing as magic.

MAGNACIOUS

You are correct in judging the worth of such performers, yet incorrect about the existence of magic. Let me give you an example. Suppose I hold a ball in my hand, and tell you I am going to make it disappear. I then proceed to wave my hands around and utter nonsense syllables and when I open my hands, the ball has vanished. What do you immediately assume?

SUSIE

That you have the ball up your sleeve.

MAGNACIOUS

Suppose instead of holding the ball, I place it upon a table. I then wave a cloth over it and behold, the ball has vanished again. What is your reaction?

SUSIE

You've either knocked the ball behind the table or grabbed it in the cloth somehow.

MAGNACIOUS

Suppose the ball is on the other side of the room, and I gesture at it and it disappears in a puff of smoke. Now what do you think has happened?

SUSIE

I'm not sure, exactly, but you probably had some device set up to create the smoke and roll the ball out of sight.

MAGNACIOUS

Very good. In all cases, then, you perceive that the ball has not actually disappeared. It has merely been removed from your sight, not from your mind, and you realize that it must still exist.

SUSIE

Well, yes. Like I said, magic isn't real.

MAGNACIOUS

Patience, child. Suppose again that I hold a ball in my hand and tell you I shall make it disappear. Once I finish, however, you realize that you cannot recall seeing a ball at all. Now what is your reaction?

SUSIE

I'd think that you never even had a ball in the first place, of course.

MAGNACIOUS

Precisely. The ball would have vanished from your mind entirely, and thus it truly disappeared. In other words, your reality was altered.

SUSIE

But how do I know anything happened at all?

MAGNACIOUS

That is the crux of the matter. Magic, true magic, depends on those it affects being completely unaware of its influence. For instance, take Corvus. Suppose you remembered him as being a crow when you entered. After the transformation spell was cast, you would see a rat in his cage instead, yet you would not believe for an instant that the crow had become a rat. Instead, you would insist that the crow had been removed and replaced with a rat, even if you had no idea how such a switch might have occurred.

SUSIE

What good is it if everything just seems the same as before?

MAGNACIOUS

My dear girl, that is up to you to decide. I am not in the business of attempting to convince people of the utility of magic. Put simply, I solve ordinary problems through extraordinary means.

SUSIE

What sort of problems?

MAGNACIOUS

My powers permit the resolution of far too many dilemmas to relate them all, yet my most popular offerings are undoubtedly my Elixirs of Everlasting Love. They come with a 30-day money back guarantee -- if the results diminish in effectiveness during that period, simply return the unused portion for a full refund.

SUSIE

Shouldn't one of these "Elixirs of Everlasting Love" last for more than thirty days? Like forever, maybe?

MAGNACIOUS

The point, young one, is that the effects of the potion are such that the recipient acquires the sensation of being everlastingly in love. After those effects wear off, that sensation naturally begins to wane.

SUSIE

And does it work on anyone at all?

MAGNACIOUS

On anyone and everyone. Magic is quite promiscuous in that regard.

SUSIE

How much do these potions cost?

MAGNACIOUS

Such matters can be settled when you have firmly established your intent to buy. If I might offer a suggestion, I would advise you to consider the matter for a day. The consequences of a hasty decision can be quite awkward.

SUSIE

Wait, I didn't say I was interested in buying one. I was just wondering, that's all.

MAGNACIOUS

I do not need the accumulated wisdom of four hundred years to ascertain your interest.

SUSIE

Wow, you're four hundred years old?

MAGNACIOUS

No. But as I said, I need not be to identify your curiosity. Do not feel embarrassed. You are not alone in desiring my services, you understand. I have a great many clients, some of whom are your age.

SUSIE

Well, OK. I'll think it over.

[A grandfather clock strikes 4 o'clock.]

Oh, wow, it's getting late. It was nice meeting you, Mr. Magnacious, but I really should be going. I have to find the vet's office before it closes. Sparky needs his pills.

MAGNACIOUS

Indeed, and though I regret the confusion, I can offer you no conventional animal services here.

[Sound of door opening. Enter LARRY holding KILLER.]

LARRY

Hi, Mr. Magnacious, I just dropped by to see if you could give me a hand with my dog again. Killer's been acting mighty strange lately. He just sits on his side of the patrol car and won't budge. I've tried yelling the magic Words of Power you taught me at him and he still doesn't do anything. Over.

[Pause for breath.]

Oh, hi there, miss. Police Sergeant Lawrence Westwood, requesting service and under your protection. No, wait. Servicing you using protection? That's not it. Serving and protecting you! Over.

SUSIE

Pleased to meet you, Mr. Westwood.

LARRY

Call me Larry. Over.

SUSIE

Right. What kind of dog is that?

LARRY

Well, I don't rightly know what breed he is. It's a funny story, how he and I came to be partners. Want to hear it? Course ya do. There we were - me and my old partner Jerry, that is - outside the comic book store. Some nutcase had taken the owner hostage.

SUSIE

Why would anyone take the owner of a comic book store hostage?

LARRY

Criminals are a downright crazy bunch sometimes. No telling what they're liable to do. Anyways, so me and Jerry decide to do this by the book. I get out my megaphone and say "THIS IS THE POLICE. YOU ARE SURROUNDED. COME OUT WITH YOUR HANDS UP. OVER." Jerry said maybe I shouldn't have said he was surrounded, on account of the fact that the scumbag might see we were the only cops in the parking lot, but I told him to be quiet and laid out the plan for taking the suspect down.

SUSIE

Aren't you supposed to try and negotiate with them first?

LARRY

This ain't television. You can't negotiate with psychos. So I tell Jerry, look, see that toy store? I bet if you sneak through it and out the back, you can come in through the service entrance of the comic book store and pop a few rounds into this SOB. Beg your pardon, miss. So Jerry slips away and I give him a few seconds before getting on the megaphone again. This time I tell that SOB that if he ain't out here by the count of three I'm gonna open fire, over. And do you know what he has the brass to say?

SUSIE

I can't imagine.

LARRY

He yells something about how there's a gas line and if I start shooting I'll blow the whole shopping mall up. Which is about as clear a threat of terrorism as I ever heard, and I figure I better take him down while I've got the chance. So I open fire and I swear I must've gotten him after five shots or so, but I'll be damned if the bastard didn't manage to set off his bomb first.

SUSIE

Are you sure it was a bomb? Maybe...

LARRY

Christ, you sound just like all those reporters and the guys in Internal Affairs. Of course it was a bomb; you heard his threat. So anyways, after the smoke cleared, I went looking for Jerry. I found him in the rubble of the toy store, burned horribly and with his head smashed in. Jerry, I says, that sure was on hell of an explosion, wasn't it, over. Jerry didn't seem too talkative and I figured maybe that meant his wounds were real serious. OK Jerry, I says, you just rest while I gather all these little bits of you up and then we'll go see the doctor, over.

SUSIE

It sounds like he was already dead.

LARRY

Well doesn't someone fancy themselves a mighty fine coroner. Anyways, as I was looking around, I see this cute little dog, all covered with blood and gore, and I think to myself, now isn't that something, over. So I go to pick him up and it occurs to me that maybe he's the reason Jerry's head looks so banged up. And so I say to the dog, well buddy, you better hope Jerry here's OK or we'll just have to call you Killer, over. And right at that moment he lets out a little bark, though it might've just been a pile of debris collapsing, and I figure Killer just might be his name after all. And me and him have been together ever since, over.

SUSIE

What a horrible story.

MAGNACIOUS

It does not grow more pleasant in the retelling, I assure you. How might I assist you, Master Westwood?

LARRY

Well, as I said, Killer's just been sitting there, and he won't do nothing, even when I use those Words of Power just like you taught me. Over.

MAGNACIOUS

I see. Perhaps you ought to demonstrate your interactions with Killer, that I might observe your technique.

LARRY

Sounds good to me, though I can't see that I'm doing anything wrong. Over.

[Sets KILLER on the ground. SUSIE approaches, curious.]

MAGNACIOUS

Let us begin with the basic commands.

LARRY (yelling)

Down on the ground, dirt bag!

SUSIE

What? Are you trying to get him to sit?

LARRY (yelling)

Stop! In the name of the law!

SUSIE

I think you mean stay.

LARRY (yelling)

Put your hands in the air!

SUSIE

Shake, boy.

LARRY (yelling)

License and registration, please!

SUSIE

Fetch!

MAGNACIOUS

I believe I have identified the source of your difficulties.

SUSIE

No kidding.

LARRY

Great. So what's wrong with Killer now?

[Sound of door opening. Enter CLARK.]

MAGNACIOUS

Greetings, Master Robertson.

CLARK

What's the matter, Sarge? Your toy dog run out of batteries again?

LARRY

Show some respect for an officer of the law, citizen.

CLARK

It's too bad you didn't hang on to the badges from every other partner you've gotten killed, or there'd be no limit to the number of Barbie dolls you could bring into the service.

LARRY

You have the right to remain silent.

CLARK

Hey there, little girl. Haven't seen you here before.

SUSIE

My name is Susie.

CLARK

The name's Clark Robertson, PI. Don't worry - not all of us in the crime fighting professions are as incompetent as "Dirty Larry" here. Has he told you about how he blew up that shopping mall yet?

SUSIE

He claimed that a terrorist holding hostages in a comic book store caused the explosion.

CLARK

I think the absurdity of that claim speaks for itself. Say, you look pretty cute. When you get married in a couple years, try to go for the jealous type. I'd love to work your... case.

SUSIE

Excuse me!

CLARK

Don't sweat it, kid. Hey, Gramps, any chance I can get another of those special love potions for tonight? I've got a close encounter of the private eye kind going down, if you follow me.

MAGNACIOUS

I shall have the potion prepared in a matter of moments.

SUSIE

What does a private investigator need with a love potion?

CLARK

What's the matter? You don't think detectives are allowed to have relationships like everyone else?

SUSIE

Well, no, that's not what I meant. It's just that you seemed to imply it was for business purposes.

CLARK

Relax, I'm just giving you a hard time. See, kid, it's like this. The days where a private eye would solve train robberies and break up strikes are long gone. Now the clients are mostly jealous husbands - sometimes wives - looking for evidence of their spouse's infidelity.

SUSIE

Well, that's too bad.

CLARK

The heck it is. I dropped out of law school to become one for that very reason.

SUSIE

Don't you find it even a little depressing to hide in bushes and snap photos of things that are only going to bring heartache and pain to those who see them?

CLARK

Nuts, kid, that's nothing a few shots of whiskey can't handle.

LARRY

I've got a couple shots I'd like to let you have. Over.

CLARK

What was that, Officer Mumbles? That's what I thought. See, that lurking in the bushes might be fine for some, but not for me. I prefer the direct approach. I'm a professional.

LARRY

I'll say you are. The kind I usually bring up on charges. Over.

CLARK

So's your old lady, Sarge, and she's still walking the streets.

SUSIE

Please! Now, Mr. Robertson, what did you mean by the direct approach?

CLARK

Well, I don't see any harm in letting you in on my trade secrets. See, when I was first starting out, I wasn't too keen on the prospect of spending a week waiting for a chance to take a couple of blurry photos. There's got to be a better way, I thought. And then it hit me. BAM.

[Clark strikes the wall with his fist.]

What's the best way to prove someone's sleeping around?

SUSIE

You can't mean...

CLARK

Sleeping with them yourself, naturally. Of course, it's hard to take pictures when your hands are full, if you get my drift, but that's nothing a well-positioned camcorder can't fix.

SUSIE

That's awful!

CLARK

Well, sometimes it is. But I've always had a tough stomach, and it is in the line of duty. Besides, I've got a reputation to uphold. Clients know that I always get the goods. A little strategic editing and airbrushing and they don't know how, but they know I deliver.

SUSIE

I can't believe they'd sleep with you.

CLARK

Thanks a lot, kid. But I will admit I was somewhat skeptical myself, at first. I mean, don't get me wrong, I know I'm quite charming and handsome, but trust me, there are a lot of kinky freaks in the world who might not agree.

LARRY

I think you're disgusting. Over.

CLARK

What's that? Listen, Sarge, just do me a huge favor and don't ever get too suspicious of your wife. My standards might be nonexistent but even I have to draw a line somewhere.

SUSIE

How could you possibly get all these women to... oh.

CLARK

You're smart, kid. Yep, Magnacious here is a real pal.

LARRY

And you're a real sleazebag. Over.

CLARK

At least I haven't put more partners in the morgue than criminals behind bars.

LARRY

That's not my fault. They always seem to get in the way of the gunfire. Over.

CLARK

The real tragedy is that you're always the one doing the firing. Heck, it looks like your dog has even taken a couple rounds. Don't tell me any criminal with a brain actually took some shots at him. It has your signature written all over it. Maybe you should spend some time at the shooting range in between the funerals you're always attending.

LARRY

I am a fully trained officer of the law, and I have it on good authority that my aim is impeccable. Over.

CLARK

I'm not sure that the dying words of your fellow officers count, Sarge.

LARRY

I'll show you! You see that rat over there! I'll drop him with one shot. Over.

CLARK

Better take cover, kid.

SUSIE

This is ridiculous. I think I'll be leaving now.

[Exit SUSIE. Larry shoots at the rat.
MAGNACIOUS looks up, briefly startled, and
returns to work.]

CLARK

Well I'll be damned. It's not moving. Maybe you got it after all.

LARRY

Let that be a lesson to you. An officer of the law is not to be
taken lightly. Come, Killer. We must resume our task of bringing
justice to the streets.

[Larry begins walking towards the exit and
realizes KILLER is not following. He returns to
pick him up before exiting.]

CLARK

Let the evil-doing rats beware. Hey Gramps, how's the potion
coming?

MAGNACIOUS

I am very nearly finished, Master Robertson. Ah. Here we are.

[Approaches CLARK holding a bottle of men's
cologne.]

Be very careful with the contents, for they are potent indeed.
Used to liberally, the sensations it creates could be
overpowering, and defeat the effect you are trying to achieve.

CLARK

Yeah, I know the drill. Thanks.

MAGNACIOUS

On the subject of payment...

CLARK

No worries, Gramps. The next one should be delivered tomorrow.
She's a beauty - my best yet!

MAGNACIOUS

I shall look forward to her arrival, then. May fortune smile on
you tonight.

CLARK

Thanks. I may stop by tomorrow and let you know how it goes.

MAGNACIOUS

I am always delighted to hear the stories of satisfied customers.

[Enter WOODY, wearing a large medal on his
forehead.]

WOODY

Hello, Mr. Magnacious. Hi Mr. Robertson.

MAGNACIOUS

Good evening, Master Woody.

CLARK

Hi there, Woody. Say, if you've come here because you're suddenly finding your vision obscured, I think I may know what your problem is.

WOODY

Huh? Oh, you must mean this medal.

CLARK

My well-trained detective's eye spotted it immediately. I think they're normally worn around the neck, though. Congratulations on whatever it is you won.

WOODY

Oh, it's not mine. It's my dad's. He won it in the 1976 Olympics.

CLARK

Is that so? Mind if I ask why you're wearing it around your head?

WOODY

Well, he said it would give me inspiration and the will to succeed. Right now it just seems to be giving me a headache, but whenever I look into a mirror I'm supposed to see the fruits of victory staring back at me.

[Goes to stand in front of painting, adjusts medal somewhat, then returns.]

That's what he said, at any rate, but it's pretty hard for my eyes to focus on it. Anyhow, I've got a big game coming up tomorrow, and Dad wants me to do my best, even if it is just a silly football game.

CLARK

What's wrong with football?

WOODY

Dad says football is for pansies. It's not a real man's sport.

CLARK

Come on, what sport is more manly than football?

WOODY

Figure skating takes more brains, brawn, and balls than all other sports combined, according to Dad.

CLARK

You've got to be kidding.

WOODY

He earned a Silver Star in Vietnam for his figure skating talents.

CLARK

That's a medal for heroism, not athletic accomplishment.

WOODY

Right. Apparently he killed everyone in an enemy camp using nothing more than his skates. He did it on a bet. Then his football player buddy tried to do the same thing with only his football helmet and shoulder pads as weapons, and got killed in the process. Dad says that proves the superiority of figure skating.

CLARK

Why aren't you a figure skater, then?

WOODY

Well, I can't seem to get the hang of standing up on the ice in the skates. I always fall down. For that matter, I often fall over while running with the football, but I usually pretend someone tackled me. Dad says I'm clumsy like my mother.

CLARK

I see.

WOODY

Plus, football players get all the girls.

CLARK

A man after my own heart!

[CLARK claps WOODY on the back.]

Good luck tomorrow. I'm off to work some of my private eye magic.

[Exit CLARK.]

MAGNACIOUS

Now then, Woody, how may I assist you?

WOODY

Well, Mr. Magnacious, it's like this. You remember how I got to be the lead quarterback after my dad threatened the principal with his ice skates?

MAGNACIOUS

I do recall you speaking of the matter several weeks ago. What of it?

WOODY

Well, it's occurred to me that, no matter what my dad says, I'm really not very good at football. I can't catch, I can't throw, and even though running is my best area I can't really do that well. I'm not even well built.

MAGNACIOUS

I fear I am not legally permitted to magically create and sell the sort of potion you would require to see dramatic improvements in muscle mass. Magic potion shops are subject to legal regulations too, you realize.

WOODY

Well, don't worry about that. Dad says he's putting a little something in my cereal to help me bulk up. But what I really need is some way to help me hang on to the ball. I always drop it after the center hikes it to me and the coach just yells and yells. My first game is tomorrow and I'm worried that if I keep dropping it I'll become the laughingstock of the school.

MAGNACIOUS

As I understand it, then, you want something that will allow you to retain your grip on the football.

WOODY

That's right.

MAGNACIOUS

I believe I can produce precisely what you need. Do you require any other services?

WOODY

No, I don't think so. Well, wait a minute. You can make love potions, right?

MAGNACIOUS

Why, yes. Such potions are well within my power to produce. Yet at our last encounter you spoke of dozens of young women who desired your companionship. Has something changed to cause this interest in love potions?

WOODY

Well, that was before word got around that I was hopelessly bad at football. But that's fine, I guess. I want someone who likes me for who I am, and not just because I'm on the football team.

MAGNACIOUS

It may well be that a magical love potion can aid you, then. But if I may, I would urge you to spend a day contemplating this decision, for magic is powerful and love is fickle and the combination can have unexpected consequences.

[Door opens. Enter CARL.]

CARL

Hiya, Magnacious.

MAGNACIOUS

Greetings, Carl Anderson.

CARL

Hi there, son. My name's Carl, Carl Anderson. You here for one of his love potions?

WOODY

I'm thinking about it.

CARL

Well, let me give you something else to consider. Why, many youngsters your age are so intent on finding the right girl that you completely forget there's a whole 'nother kingdom full of companions out there. The animal kingdom, that is. And do you know which animal is prized above all others for the four years of joyful companionship and the lifetime of memories it can bring?

WOODY

The gerbil?

CARL

Wrong, my young friend, but not wrong by much, I'll grant you. The animal in question is none other than the noble white rate.

WOODY

The rat.

CARL

Now, now, my boy, I can hear the skepticism in your voice. Believe me, I understand. Why, I've spoken to hundreds of young people who felt exactly the same as you do. Rats are dirty, they said. Rats attack babies. Rats are short-lived and foul-tempered. Rats eat the furniture. Why, I even met one young lady who insisted that rats carry the plague.

WOODY

But aren't all of those things true?

CARL

Why focus on all the bad parts? Life is too short for so much negativity. WE should instead look at the numerous positive qualities of rats. They're excellent companions. They're very cute when they're clean. They're quite portable. They're also less expensive than Dalmatians.

WOODY

I'd think you'd have trouble giving them away, let alone charging for them.

CARL

That's exactly what my wife of nineteen years said, God rest her soul.

MAGNACIOUS

My deepest sympathies, Carl. I did not realize she had passed away.

CARL

Honestly, I'm not sure she has. I just add on that "God rest her soul" bit to be on the safe side. She divorced me about three months ago. She said she couldn't understand why I wouldn't stop trying to sell rats that no one wanted, and that she had given up waiting for me to come to my senses.

WOODY

That's too bad.

CARL

Well, on the bright side I can now let the rats have free run of the house. They're happier than they've ever been, the little scamps, and they're great fun to be around. Except sometimes at night after they've devoured all the food in the house, they swarm all over my bed and try to eat me. But those occasions are rare.

WOODY

Have you had any luck selling them?

CARL

I think the pet rat market is in something of a slump at the moment. I've only made one sale in the past six months, to our friend Magnacious here. Say, how is old Whiskers doing, anyhow?

MAGNACIOUS

I believe I mentioned that he would be known as Corvus from now on.

CARL

Nonsense. You can't just change their names arbitrarily, or they'll never learn to respond. Whiskers! Hey Whiskers! Speak to Daddy! See, you must have confused him by calling him Corvus. I know what he needs - a bit of exercise. Mind if I let him out of his cage for a while?

MAGNACIOUS

If it pleases you, though I would ask that you keep a watchful eye on him. Certain magical components in here could be quite harmful to his health.

CARL

Alright. I'll make sure he doesn't get into any trouble.

[CARL goes to cage and concentrates on figuring out how to open it. He spends a few minutes at this task.]

MAGNACIOUS

Now, young master, I have created this very special magical substance to aid you in your sporting event tomorrow.

[MAGNACIOUS hands WOODY a pot of super glue.]

WOODY

How does it work?

MAGNACIOUS

Simply apply it liberally to your hands prior to contact with the football and you shall find it exceedingly difficult to lose your grip on it.

WOODY

Sounds good.

MAGNACIOUS

If I may offer a brief word of advice: once you have the football in your hands, run as fast as you can.

WOODY

Naturally. I'll do my best! Thanks again.

MAGNACIOUS

You are most welcome, dear boy. I shall look forward to hearing of your experience.

[Exit WOODY. CARL finally removes rat from cage.]

CARL

Whiskers! Whiskers, say something! Speak to me!

MAGNACIOUS

Calm yourself, Carl. He is ordinarily very quiet. You will only succeed in upsetting him if you carry on in this manner.

CARL

Oh no! Whiskers is dead!

MAGNACIOUS

Upon further reflection, he has been oddly still since the transformation spell this afternoon. I wonder if rats are particularly susceptible to the effects of smoke inhalation.

CARL

Oh why?! Why?! He was still so young!

MAGNACIOUS

Again, I would ask you to remain calm, my friend. He lived a full and exciting life, and though his untimely departure is tragic, it should not be an occasion of utter grief. We shall give Corvus... Whiskers the burial he deserves, and then negotiate the price of a replacement.

CARL

Why should I sell you another of my magnificent animals if this is how you take care of them?!

MAGNACIOUS

Do not let your anguish impair your judgment, friend. I have been listening to you speak of your troubles and I believe I have happened upon a means of solving them. In exchange for another rat - for I find their companionship quite pleasing - I shall provide you with a magical potion, which you will use in the following manner...

[FADE TO BLACK.]

Scene 2

[Scene opens with Magnacious pondering a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore by candlelight.]

MAGNACIOUS (quietly)

"It was many and many a year ago, in a kingdom by the sea..."

[Sound of knocking on the door. Door opens. Enter SUSIE.]

MAGNACIOUS

Why hello, my dear child. I am sorry I did not get a chance to see you off yesterday evening, but I am pleased to see you have returned here.

SUSIE

Well, it's just that... I've been thinking some more about your magic potions.

MAGNACIOUS

Do go on.

SUSIE

Ever since I - my family and I, that is - moved here from North Dakota, I haven't been able to make many friends at school. Mom says that I have a lovely personality and I should just be patient, but it's been three years and it just seems like nobody wants to be my friend. I can't understand it.

MAGNACIOUS

So you desire to be more popular, in other words.

SUSIE

Yes. I mean no. I mean, I don't want to be the most popular girl in school or anything, I just want people to like me.

MAGNACIOUS

Then you have truly ventured into the correct magic potion shop, for such a desire is well within my powers to satisfy.

SUSIE

How can you say that with such confidence? I mean, I know you've said you can make love potions, but I think this is a little different. I can't get everyone in school to drink a potion.

MAGNACIOUS

The difference is one of scale and nothing more. Magic is quite indifferent to such obstacles.

SUSIE

I have to ask. You say this magic of yours can produce love potions and make me as popular as I want. Is there anything you can't do?

MAGNACIOUS

You are a remarkable young girl indeed. You cannot imagine how few people care to ask that question. Most are satisfied to learn that their particular problems are not as insurmountable as they had feared. Magic, like all such fundamental forces, has a rather substantial limitation. It cannot alter the past one iota. The future may be as clay, but the past is fixed in stone.

SUSIE

But you said that your magic made me forget the old nature of things after they were magically altered. Like with the rat!

MAGNACIOUS

Indeed, for otherwise magic would be quite ineffective. Yet such is only a trick of memory, though a devilishly complicated one. The events of the past are beyond any magical device. However, through a careful shaping of events and the memories of others, one might achieve a future in which the past seems to have been something entirely different from what actually took place. Yet this is small consolation in some circumstances.

SUSIE

Like what?

MAGNACIOUS

I cannot restore life where it has been lost. Nor can I counteract powerful enchantments intended to last for all eternity.

SUSIE

I guess that's too bad and all, but if you can do so many other great things, then maybe that's not so important.

MAGNACIOUS

I have indeed come to feel this way, though it has taken many years. I have not always dwelled in this city, you understand. Once, long ago, I was a young man. Young, and foolish. In my arrogance I sought fortunes that could bankrupt nations in exchange for my services. Yet in spite of my foolishness I was a happy man, for I had the love of a radiantly beautiful maiden. We were to be wed in the grandest ceremony ever known to mankind.

SUSIE

What happened?

MAGNACIOUS

One day a poor, elderly crone came into my tower. I bade her depart, for 'twas obvious she could not afford my services. Yet she would not go. She told me how her youngest child had taken sick and was near death. Gripped in the folly of my pride, I took no heed of her pleas, and when she again refused to depart I grew wrathful. I was on the verge of expelling her forcefully when a dazzling light appeared around her. When the light faded, the old woman was gone, and in her place stood my intended bride. I immediately sought to apologize, yet I realized as I did so that it could have no effect. She spoke only these words: until time and wisdom have softened your heart, I too shall be as stone, for I cannot wed a man who can feel no compassion.

SUSIE

She turned herself to stone?

MAGNACIOUS

Indeed, and though I sought for many years to unravel her spell, it could not be done. The years have been long since that time, and though I have sought to find wisdom and compassion, I fear I am fated to remain a fool, and alone, forever.

SUSIE

I'm very sorry.

MAGNACIOUS

I appreciate your sympathy, and yet it is not necessary. I have come to peace with the matter, insofar as that is possible.

SUSIE

So... How do you do magic? Like when you're casting a spell? Do you just wave your hands and utter some words?

MAGNACIOUS

There are secrets that may not be revealed to the uninitiated, yet it can do no harm to tell you of those things that are already known by outsiders, after a fashion. Gestures and words of power form a vital part of any spell, and yet by themselves these things are sufficient for only the very minor spells. Artifacts of magic are required for more elaborate workings.

SUSIE

What sort of artifacts?

MAGNACIOUS

They vary from wizard to wizard, yet two that I personally use are the wizard's staff, and the wizard's cloak. My staff was shaped by powerful magic from the living branch of an ash tree, and has served me well over the years. It is never far from my side.

SUSIE

I don't see it.

MAGNACIOUS

It is leaning against that wall. Oh. It seems to be absent at the moment. Be not afraid, however, I am sure it will turn up shortly. Of more importance is my cloak. Woven from the hide of the hippogriff, it shields and shrouds me from the effects of magic, as well as offering more mundane protection. My cloak is the reason my memory remains intact during and after I am working a spell.

SUSIE

May I take a closer look?

MAGNACIOUS

You may.

[MAGNACIOUS sweeps his cloak over the table, and the burning candle, to permit SUSIE a closer look.]

SUSIE

Interesting texture. Wow, is that a bullet hole?

MAGNACIOUS

Unlikely, for none should be so foolish as to fire a weapon at me, I assure you.

[Cloak catches on fire.]

SUSIE

Do you smell smoke?

MAGNACIOUS

Why... good heavens!

[MAGNACIOUS hastily removes the cloak, throws it to the ground and upends a few potions onto it.]

SUSIE

Uh oh. Will it still work?

MAGNACIOUS

Undoubtedly, though I should like to wait until it has dried before wearing it once more.

SUSIE

Well, about the potions. I guess I'd like one to help me be more popular, and maybe one of your love potions, too. There's this cute boy in math class who I've got sort of a crush on.

MAGNACIOUS

They shall be prepared within the hour. First, I should like to discuss the question of payment.

SUSIE

Payment?

MAGNACIOUS

Surely you do not expect services rendered by a wizard of my caliber to come free of charge. I no longer demand vast fortunes, yet I cannot work for nothing.

SUSIE

I'm afraid I don't have much money. My allowance is only a few dollars a week.

MAGNACIOUS

That should prove no great barrier, for my financial needs are adequately met by the curator of the Museum of Spanish American History. Such a dear old lady. Yet even so, I find that gold doubloons do not go as far as they used to, and I am left with other material desires.

SUSIE

If you don't want money, then what do you want?

MAGNACIOUS

Traditional forms of payment might include your long, golden hair, your voice, your firstborn son, your eternal soul, your maidenhood...

SUSIE

Excuse me?!

MAGNACIOUS

Oh, I'm dreadfully sorry, young lady. I was merely reciting a list from memory. I assure you I have no designs upon you after that fashion.

SUSIE

Well, I don't want to give you any of those other things, either!

MAGNACIOUS

They were merely suggestions, my dear child. Now, let me think. How are you at the culinary arts?

SUSIE

You mean cooking? Well, I can make salad... and chocolate chip cookies...

MAGNACIOUS

Splendid! I've not had a decent batch of chocolate chip cookies in ages!

SUSIE

I'm not sure mine are really that good. I usually burn them slightly.

MAGNACIOUS

A magic spell has not yet been devised that could mend burned cookies, I fear. Yet even so, I count it a bargain well struck. A plateful of your cookies for my assistance, then. Are we agreed?

SUSIE

Why... why yes, that sounds fine.

[Door opens. Enter CLARK.]

CLARK

Listen, Gramps, you've gotta help me. See, I figured last night would be a piece of cake, right?

MAGNACIOUS

You certainly did not seem lacking in confidence.

CLARK

I figured it was a great job, nothing could go wrong. I was supposed to gather evidence that Mayor Kimball's lover was cheating on him. Heck, I thought a lover was bound to be better than his wife, even, because there'd be less risk of a guilty conscience afterwards. On her part, I mean.

SUSIE

Did something go wrong with your wonderful plan?

CLARK

Gee, kid, it ain't your mistress I was sleeping with. Lighten up. So there I was, waiting in my car, a dozen roses and a bottle of wine in the passenger seat. Everything was set. Then the lover's car pulls up in front of her apartment building and she steps out. It's hard to make her out in the dim light but I can tell something's funny. But it wasn't until I followed her upstairs to her room and made my move that... oh Lord.

SUSIE

What happened?

CLARK

Well, seems the mayor's lover's not a she after all. She's a he.

SUSIE (laughing)

There goes your perfect record.

CLARK

Not on your life, kid. All in the line of duty.

SUSIE

You don't mean to say...

CLARK

So anyways, Gramps, I really need your help.

MAGNACIOUS

I fear magic cannot change this person from a man into a woman, my friend.

CLARK

Don't be silly. I just need something to erase all my memories of last night. And maybe a second dose for after I review the video with the mayor.

MAGNACIOUS

Hmm, let me see. I believe I have something that will do the trick. "Water of Lethe" I call it. One moment.

[MAGNACIOUS goes to his table and searches for a bottle.]

CLARK

Attaboy, Gramps. I knew you wouldn't let me down.

[Three gunshots are heard in the distance.]

SUSIE

What was that?

CLARK

Gunshots. I didn't know this was a high crime area, Gramps.

[MAGNACIOUS returns with a bottle of Vodka, and hands it to CLARK.]

MAGNACIOUS

There you are. A rather potent dose, to be sure, but you should consume at least half of it as quickly as possible. The remainder should suffice for after your meeting.

CLARK

Thanks a bundle.

[Enter LARRY, drenched in red blood. He is holding a poster board sign, also bloodstained, and the staff.]

LARRY

Don't worry, Mr. Magnacious, I got those street punks for you. Over.

CLARK

I'll say you did. Did you sneak up and waste them at point blank range or something?

LARRY

Well, that was the plan. But they heard me coming so I just opened fire anyway. Over.

SUSIE

You shot them?! Were they armed?

LARRY

One of them had a large, dangerous-looking staff. Over.

MAGNACIOUS

Ah, I see you have returned my marvelous sign and my wizard's staff, Master Robertson. My heartfelt gratitude. I believe this squares our account once again.

LARRY

Aw, heck, Mr. Magnacious, it wasn't nothing special. Over.

SUSIE

I can't believe you shot them!

CLARK

That makes two of us, kid.

LARRY

Don't worry, little girl. I wasn't using real bullets. I just opened up with my magic bullet gun. Mr. Magnacious here suggested it, on account of how I was always managing to get in trouble for shooting some poor slob. Over.

SUSIE

Magic bullets?

CLARK

You mean you were using blanks?

SUSIE

Then why are you covered in blood?

LARRY

As I was heading back here in my patrol car, that blasted staff - begging your pardon, Mr. Magnacious - got stuck under the brake pedal. Then that cursed sign went and blocked the windshield, and next thing I knew there was a bloodmobile in front of me and I couldn't stop in time. Then the blood was everywhere. I swear, it was like the Police Commissioner's Ball all over again.

SUSIE

Where's Killer?

LARRY

Well, that's kind of a sad story, miss. See, after I come to my senses again, I figure I better go check on the reckless driver of that bloodmobile. I look around and I don't see Killer, though there's a large hole in his side of the windshield so I figure maybe he didn't buckle his seatbelt like he's supposed to. But I head over to the driver's window anyhow, and he's just lying there motionless. Damn drivers falling asleep at the wheel. I say "License and registration, please" and it looks like he doesn't hear me, so I repeat it again a lot louder. He still doesn't respond but all of a sudden I start hearing a lot of cars honking and I turn around and see Killer running across the street toward the patrol car. He must've gotten thrown clear across the road. He's got this intent look on his face, and he seems to be trying to fetch that staff of yours, Mr. Magnacious. Then this big truck comes roaring by and squishes him flatter than a pancake. It all happened so fast. Over.

SUSIE

That's terrible!

[Door opens. Enter CARL, who is now dressed very nicely.]

CARL

Whoa there, son, what in the hell happened to you?

CLARK

He crashed into a bloodmobile and got his police dog killed.

CARL

That's mighty tragic, boy, mighty tragic. But there's a silver lining in every cloud, as they say, and here's none other than Carl Anderson, Rat Salesman Extraordinaire, bringing you your silver.

[CARL and LARRY shake hands. CARL then wipes his hand on LARRY'S uniform.]

It's too bad about your pooch, son, but today is your lucky day. How'd you like to be the first policeman ever to have a police rat as a partner?

LARRY

I'm not sure that rats are standard issue police pets, sir. Over.

CARL

Now don't you fret about that, son. Why, until this morning hardly nobody considered them pets at all. Now they're selling for \$10,000 each. I'm willing to let one go for the low low price of \$8,000, on account of you being a friend of Mr. Magnacious here, but that offer's ending soon. Think of how great a partner a rat would make: no barking, no biting, no walking him.

LARRY

Killer wasn't like that. He was a good dog. Real quiet.

CLARK

Yeah, and he's even quieter now.

LARRY

I don't think I want a rat. Over.

CARL

What about you, miss? Why, I've sold dozens of my fabulous white rats to little girls just like you this morning. I'm sure you'll agree it's a mighty fine pet, especially after you have a sip of some cool refreshing beverage.

SUSIE

What does that drink have to do with anything?

CARL

Oh, nothing. It's just hard to appreciate the countless virtues of a rat when you're feeling dehydrated.

SUSIE

I'll pass, thanks. I already have a dog named Sparky and I love him!

CARL

That's quite all right. I'm sure you'll reconsider once you see how much your friends at school adore theirs. You may have to beg your parents to use the money they'd planned to spend putting you through college to buy one, but a college education just isn't as big a deal these days.

MAGNACIOUS

Good day, Carl. I perceive our plan has worked as intended.

CARL

Yes it certainly has. Why, I've earned over \$600,000 already today. Soon I'll have sold my entire supply, and I'll have to wait another few hours for my breeding stock to have more. Anyone else here thinking about buying a rat companion?

CLARK

I think I'll pass.

CARL

Suit yourself. I'm off to make more money!

[Exit CARL.]

LARRY

I really should be going. The service for Killer is scheduled for later this evening, and I need to get cleaned up. Over.

CLARK

I'm off as well. I've got some heavy-duty forgetting to do.

[Door opens. Enter WOODY. He is walking on crutches and is heavily bandaged, especially his hands. Exit CARL. Exit LARRY.]

Whoa there. It looks like I'm not the only one with some bad memories. Word of advice, son, if she gets out the whips and the cheese grater, it's time to be leaving. I've been there too, and it's not pretty.

[Exit CLARK.]

SUSIE (whispered)

It's him! He's the boy from math class that I like!

MAGNACIOUS (whispered)

I shall handle it, child. Have no fear.

MAGNACIOUS (to WOODY)

Master Woody. Your health appears to have declined since last I saw you.

WOODY

Tell me about it. The doctors said they'd never seen anyone wearing pads get so banged up on the football field. The good news is that I set a new school record. Two of them, actually. I ran the ball 610 yards over the course of the game. Reporters said they'd never seen a quarterback do so much running, and that it was almost like I was running for my life. My dad is so proud of me.

SUSIE

What was the other record?

WOODY

The most times a quarterback has ever been sacked in one game. 97 times. The last seven or eight times were the worst, though.

SUSIE

Why are your hands covered in bandages?

WOODY

Well, after each down they had to rip the football out of my hands. The skin started coming off too, and that hurt, but the magic grip ointment was somewhat soothing at least. After a while there was so much of my flesh hanging from the football that the receivers and running backs stopped hassling me about not passing it to them. Which was nice, since I couldn't seem to throw it. Say, aren't you stinky Susie?

SUSIE

Don't call me that!

WOODY

Sure, you're Stinky Susie! The girl that smells like the men's locker room!

MAGNACIOUS

Master Woody. Please refrain from ridiculing my clients, or I shall have to ask you to depart.

WOODY

Sorry, Mr. Magnacious, sir. I was just wondering if maybe you had any healing potions. The doctors gave me some morphine for all the pain, but the guys on the team said that morphine wouldn't really do that much good, and that I should just let them hang on to it instead. So I did, but I'm still hurting something awful.

MAGNACIOUS

Have a seat, dear boy, and make yourself comfortable. I will attend you in a moment. I know just the thing to ease your agonies. Susie, step this way.

[WOODY sits with some difficulty, and lets his mind wander. SUSIE and MAGNACIOUS approach the wizard's table.]

SUSIE

What is it?

MAGNACIOUS

Do you still have a romantic interest in this lad? After his hurtful words, I would expect that perhaps your feelings have diminished.

SUSIE

Well, no, I mean, it's not his fault. Everyone calls me that. I don't understand it. Mom says I just smell natural, like Sparky. What's wrong with that?

MAGNACIOUS

Hmm, yes. Yes, I think I see. I believe I know how we might enhance your popularity. Just a moment, dear child.

[MAGNACIOUS rummages through his supplies for a moment before producing a can of aerosol deodorant. MAGNACIOUS hands the deodorant to SUSIE.]

This potion has been magically concentrated to produce a very fine mist. Simply apply it to areas where perspiration is concentrated and you will find that others will be much more eager to interact with you.

SUSIE

That's all? Well, thanks.

[SUSIE applies deodorant.]

MAGNACIOUS (loudly)

Now, Susie, be a dear and bring these potent herbs to Woody. Oh, and he will require a glass of water to take them. There is one on the end of the table, there. It will suffice.

[Takes some aspirin from a bottle and hands them to SUSIE. Points to a clearly-marked Love Potion on the table.]

SUSIE

But isn't that a love potion?

MAGNACIOUS

I believe it will serve to satisfy your other request.

SUSIE

I see. Thank you. Thanks very much!

[SUSIE brings the Love Potion and the aspirin to WOODY.]

WOODY

Oh, thanks.

[WOODY drinks the Love Potion and the medicine.]

Say, you don't smell so bad after all. In fact, you smell kind of nice. Like roses on a summer day.

SUSIE

Really? You really think so? Wow, I think that's the nicest thing anyone's ever said to me.

WOODY

I'm sorry I made fun of you. It's just that everyone always said... well, never mind. You must think I'm a real jerk.

SUSIE

No... No, I don't. I think you're kind of cute, actually.

WOODY

Really? Well, gee, thanks.

SUSIE

And I'm glad you did so well in your game. I've always thought you must be a great athlete. You look so strong.

WOODY

Wow. You're the best girl ever.

[WOODY tries to stand to embrace SUSIE, but his crutches fall out of his hands and he collapses to the floor. SUSIE helps WOODY to his feet. They kiss.]

SUSIE

Oh. My.

WOODY

Cool. So do you maybe want to go on a date some time?

SUSIE

I'd love to!

WOODY

What sort of things do you like to do?

SUSIE

I really enjoy horseback riding. And figure skating.

WOODY

Figure skating?

SUSIE

Is there something wrong with figure skating?

WOODY

No. No, it's great. It's just I'm not very good. I always fall down once I've got the skates on.

SUSIE

Yeah, that always happened to me at first, too. But I got better with practice.

WOODY

Really? Then maybe...

SUSIE

Yeah, it helps to have someone there to help you.

WOODY

Are you busy tonight?

SUSIE

No.

WOODY

Perfect. Let's go now!

[WOODY and SUSIE exit the shop together. WOODY is still using crutches. After a moment, SUSIE returns.]

SUSIE

Mr. Magnacious? I just wanted to say thank you again, for everything.

MAGNACIOUS

Think nothing of it, my dear. See that you bring me those chocolate chip cookies, however.

SUSIE

You can count on it! Bye bye!

MAGNACIOUS

Farewell, child.

[Exit SUSIE. Enter CARL.]

CARL

Great news, Mr. Magnacious! My wife just called! She told me she wants to get back together, that she's sorry she didn't believe in me all along! We're getting married again!

MAGNACIOUS

Congratulations, my friend.

CARL

It's going to be the best wedding ever. There'll be violins, and flowers, and fountains, and champagne for all!

MAGNACIOUS

I recall when I too had such plans. May you find the greatest joy in your celebration of love, Carl.

CARL

Say, you know what would look perfect at the wedding party? That classy statue of yours over there. I don't suppose you'd let me borrow it.

MAGNACIOUS

I... I would be honored if you would accept it as my gift, Carl Anderson.

CARL

Thanks a lot, Mr. Magnacious! I really appreciate it!

MAGNACIOUS

You are welcome, Carl.

[Exit CARL, dragging the statue. MAGNACIOUS appears lost in thought for a moment. The door opens, and CLARK enters.]

CLARK

The delivery crew is here with the new statue, Gramps. Say, what happened to the last one I brought? Ah, never mind. I guess you didn't have room for two of my masterpieces. OK, boys, bring her in!

[FADE TO BLACK.]