



"PILOT"

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&

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Magic is believing in yourself, if you can do that, you can make anything happen.

- *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*



What the eyes see and the ears hear, the mind believes.

- *Harry Houdini*



"MIIIIINNDDDDFFREEEAACKKK!"

- *Criss Angel*



All of the magic performed in this show will be real.

COLD OPEN

1 EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

1

HOLLY LE (28), dressed as a wizard, with a long white beard, is performing on a small stage with a small table on it.

HOLLY

(old wizard voice)

Tales of the enchanted goblet
spread across the lands. But it had
vanished, missing for centuries.
For no mere mortal could gain
access to it. The goblet has been
awaiting an all-powerful wizard to
summon its return.

Holly waves her hand over the table and a large metal goblet appears. We hear gasps and applause and pull back to reveal her audience is a group of six-year-olds wearing party hats.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

(old wizard voice)

And it's full of Cheez-Its!

She pours the Cheez-Its into her mouth and the kids laugh.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

(normal voice)

Mmm. Centuries later and they're
still a perfect food.

(then)

Next, I would like the birthday
girl to help me with my next trick.

A small girl, SCARLETT, walks up on stage.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Now, Scarlett, I want you to take
my wand and tap the edge of the
goblet and say these very serious
ancient magic words... "Hippo
tickle bubble butt."

All the kids burst out laughing. Holly smiles, but tries not to break character. Scarlett takes the wand and taps the edge of the goblet.

SCARLETT

(giggling)

Hippo tickle bubble butt.

Holly takes the goblet and looks inside it for a second.

HOLLY

Hmmm... I don't see anything.

(then)

Wait a minute... What do we have here?!

Holly starts to pull something out of the goblet. After a second of struggling, she pulls out an over-sized stuffed monkey and hands it to Scarlett who hugs it tightly.

SCARLETT

Monkey!

The kids laugh and scream with excitement as Holly takes it all in. A LITTLE BOY furtively raises his hand.

HOLLY

Yes, my brave young lad?

LITTLE BOY

Mason peed his pants.

ANOTHER LITTLE BOY

I did too!

HOLLY

Okay... It's okay. How many of you guys peed your pants?

Three other kids raise their hands.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Then I will use my magical powers to summon... a mommy!

(calling off)

Mrs. Traeger?... Mrs. Traeger?

MAIN TITLES

ACT ONE

2 EXT. THE MAGIC PALACE - EVENING

2

Holly walks up to a grandiose mansion (think half-Hogwarts, half-exclusive club) with a sign out front that reads "The Magic Palace". She looks up at the building in awe, taking in its majesty. As she is about to step into the front entrance:

ANTHONY (O.S.)

Holly!

Holly stops and looks over to see her friend, ANTHONY (28), in a waiter uniform, waving her over.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

That's for guests and performers. I gotta sneak you in through the service entrance.

HOLLY

Oh! Sorry!

ANTHONY

The show starts in two minutes!

They rush to the back.

3 INT. THE MAGIC PALACE - VARIOUS - CONTINUOUS

3

Anthony leads Holly through the kitchen, swiping a sandwich off the counter as they rush through. A CHEF looks up.

CHEF

I brought that from home!

ANTHONY

Sorry, Maurice!

He hands Holly the sandwich as they keep running.

HOLLY

Should I give this back?

ANTHONY

No just keep going!

HOLLY

Okay!

They go through double doors into:

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

As Holly and Anthony continue to make their way through the Palace, Holly's eyes widen in wonder as they pass portraits of famous alumni who have performed at The Magic Palace: David Copperfield, Penn and Teller, Lance Burton, etc.

ANTHONY

All right, we're going backstage.
Just make sure to be cool.

They pass through another door into:

4

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

4

We see the hustle and bustle before a performance. STAGE HANDS move props, animal cages, etc. THE MICHAELS (40's), in leather outfits, spray hairspray as they walk by.

HOLLY

Oh my god! Those were The Michaels!
I am freaking out. Can't be cool.
Can't do it. Sorry. Their hairspray
got in my mouth. This is awesome!

ANTHONY

(laughs, grabs her hand)
I know! I'm never cool around them.
C'mon, we can see the show better
from over here.

They go to a better vantage point of the stage. Holly puts her bag down. Projected on the curtain is the name VAL EVANS, along with an image of a handsome man with an intense stare.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Hey, so, how was the gig today?

HOLLY

It was good, but I think I'm ready
to start using real animals. Does
your uncle still have that spider
monkey?

ANTHONY

No, his neighbor called the cops on
him. The monkey kept breaking into
his car.

HOLLY

Aw, that's too bad.

Anthony looks out into the audience.

ANTHONY

Wow. Full house tonight. Even the Ministry of Magic is here.

ANGLE ON four OLD WHITE MEN in suits in the front row.

HOLLY

Huh, I've always wondered what they looked like. They're like... regal uncles. Do you think they secretly wear cloaks and have wands like in Harry Potter?

ANTHONY

Don't mention Harry Potter around them. They're real sensitive about which Ministry of Magic came first.
(then)

Hey, can you still help me with my audition for the open magician's spot? The Ministry is judging and I just want to make sure I'm perfect.

HOLLY

Of course! I can't believe this is finally happening for you. You're totally getting our dream job!
(beat, then)

Maybe... maybe I'll audition, too.

ANTHONY

Yeah! I mean, if you feel like you're ready this year then you should.

HOLLY

Yeah, I think-- I think I'm ready.

ANTHONY

(sensing her doubt)

Are you sure? I'm only saying that because I've been working on my audition for six months, non-stop.

HOLLY

Yeah, you're right. Maybe next year. Next year I'll definitely be ready. Or in, like, two years. Three years tops, I will totally audition. We'll see. Maybe four.

MUSIC CUES and the lights dim. We hear an ANNOUNCER:

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to
The Magic Palace! Prepare
yourselves for a night of mystery,
intrigue and dazzlement by the
world's greatest magicians.

(then, quickly)

No flash photography or recording
during this time. Shows use
pyrotechnics, strobe lights, and
severely suggestive imagery. We are
not responsible for any heart
attacks, strokes or seizures that
may occur.

(beat, then)

Bienvenidos, señoras y señores!

As the announcement continues in Spanish we ANGLE ON Anthony
and Holly, squealing in excitement.

5 INT. MAIN STAGE - CONTINUOUS

5

The curtains open and the audience cheers. VAL EVANS (40's),
dressed in a flashy sequined outfit appears on stage with his
glamorous assistant, PENNY (30's).

VAL

Welcome... to the danger zone!

Val waves his arms and flames rise from the stage. Kenny
Loggins - "Danger Zone" blares from the speakers. He "throws"
a fireball in front of Penny. In an instant, Penny disappears
and a dozen doves fly out of the flame.

ANGLE ON Holly and Anthony as they gasp.

HOLLY

So. Freakin. Awesome. Remember the
first time we saw Val Evans
perform?

ANTHONY

Uh, yeah. Eighth Grade. Magic Camp.
I threw up on Erin Katz 'cause I
was so excited.

ANGLE BACK ON Val as he performs to a rapt audience.

VAL

I bet I know what you're all
thinking. Penny looks sheepish...

Val throws a tarp over a slightly disheveled Penny, who tries to keep a plastered smile on her face. When he pulls the tarp away a second later, a sheep is in her place.

6 INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

6

Holly and Anthony continue to watch.

HOLLY
He's so cool!

ANTHONY
I know! I don't know why his wives
keep leaving him.

Suddenly they hear a horrible growl noise. They see Holly had placed her bag next to the lynx cage and it's eating her sandwich. It starts to writhe with pained gasps.

HOLLY
Oh my god! Is he choking?!
It's foaming at the mouth!

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Is it having a seizure? I
don't know what to do!

*

JAKE, the manager, (30's) and the Michaels come over.

JAKE
What the hell is going on?
(he sees the lynx)
What happened to the lynx?!

HOLLY
I am so, so sorry--

JAKE
Who are you?

ANTHONY
She's my friend--

Just then, Val storms in from the stage.

VAL
Hey, I have a great idea! Let's all
scream when Val's on stage--
(seeing the lynx)
Who gave my lynx a sandwich?! He's
severely diabetic! Who doesn't know
that?

MICHAEL V
Jake! We have trespassers attacking
our animals and probably trying to
kill us.

MICHAEL B

Jake! You're the manager here! It's your job to keep us safe. Michael and I are very famous gay icons!

ANTHONY

I'm not trespassing! I'm a waiter here! Mr. Evans, I've even picked up your dry cleaning a few times.

VAL

I have absolutely no clue who you are. But maybe it's because you have a very nondescript face.

MICHAEL B

I don't care if he works here, we shouldn't have to deal with this stuff! I have eczema! I can't handle anything else!

MICHAEL V

You don't have eczema. It's just a little dry skin.

MICHAEL B

Don't tell me what I don't have!

JAKE

Everyone stop! Michaels, no one's trying to kill you. Val, you need to get back out there, Penny is still in a box, and we have a full house. Anthony, can you please go do your job and not sneak your friend back here to ruin our shows?

VAL

Fine. I guess I'll just turn Penny into something else.

(pointed to Holly)

Maybe a roast beef sandwich.

Val goes back onto the stage. After a beat.

HOLLY

So... we should probably go?

ANTHONY

...Yeah, we need to leave now.

*
*

7

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

7

Anthony and Holly sit on the hood of her car.

HOLLY
(feeling guilty)
Ughhhhhhh... that was bad. That was
so, so bad.

ANTHONY
Don't feel too bad. Val can get
another lynx at the snap of his
fingers. When you're a magician
here you can get whatever you want.
The Palace really takes care of
their performers-- they're the
elite. Which is why I really want
that open spot.

HOLLY
Then you'll be drowning in lynxes.

ANTHONY
I know. I just need to work on my
opener.

Anthony takes out a quarter from his pocket.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Remember that floating coin trick
we worked on? I'm having trouble
attaching the string at the
beginning...

Holly takes the coin from him.

HOLLY
Yeah, I usually tell a funny story.
If people are laughing, they don't
pay attention to your hands. Like,
"On my twenty-first birthday, I ate
so many Doritos I threw up..."

ANTHONY
(laughing)
Everyone else goes to Vegas to do
shots but you binged bags of
Doritos...

The coin then floats in Holly's hand. It spins higher and
flies around Anthony to float in Holly's other hand.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Whoa! Show me how you did that!

ANGLE ON a Ministry of Magic member watching their exchange.
He takes out his phone and makes a call.

MINISTRY MEMBER #1

(into phone)

I found her... Yes, I'll bring her down... This is Simon by the way, I got a new phone.

After a beat, he approaches Holly and Anthony.

HOLLY

"...And even though Cool Ranch is still everyone's favorite, it tastes like vomit to--"

MINISTRY MEMBER #1

Excuse me, young lady. May I speak to you for a moment?

Anthony and Holly stop dead in their tracks and stare wide-eyed at the Ministry member. Anthony takes back his coin.

8

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

8

The ministry member leads Holly down a long winding stairway. It's dark and seemingly never ending.

HOLLY

(nervous)

I'm really sorry about the lynx. It was an honest mistake. And I'll totally pay for a new one. Just let me know where you buy lynx...

They continue to walk in silence through dark hallways.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Wow... a person could get lost down here... lost forever...

(off his silence)

I'm not saying you're kidnapping me, but if you are, I should warn you that I'm really, really ugly when I cry. Like snot everywhere.

He opens a door, to reveal three cloaked figures.

MINISTRY MEMBER #2

State your name.

HOLLY

Bob.

MINISTRY MEMBER #1

Your real name.

HOLLY
Sorry, Holly Le.

MINISTRY MEMBER #2
Well, Holly Le...

They pull down their hoods: they're the Ministry of Magic.

HOLLY
(gasp, then to herself)
They do wear cloaks.

MINISTRY MEMBER #2
We'd like to offer you... a
position at the Magic Palace.

HOLLY
...Like as a dishwasher or janitor?

MINISTRY MEMBER #1
No. Your performance in the parking
lot was impeccable. We think you'd
be a perfect fit here.

HOLLY
Wait, wait... I'm sorry, are you
offering me the magician's spot?
But you only saw me do one trick.

MINISTRY MEMBER #3
All we need is one trick. We're the
Ministry of Magic.

HOLLY
This is-- I can't believe it. I...
whoa. This is crazy...

MINISTRY MEMBER #1
You have exactly what we're looking
for. We're going to cancel the
auditions, so, just say yes.

HOLLY
Yes! Yes! Thank you so much.

Holly bursts into ugly tears, overwhelmed and excited.

MINISTRY MEMBER #1
Wow. You weren't kidding about the
ugly crying. It's... intense.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

9 EXT. THE MAGIC PALACE PARKING LOT - MORNING

9

Holly is standing by her car, holding her bag. She's talking to someone off camera.

HOLLY

...And I can't believe I'm here, it happened so fast. I'm a little terrified. But also, I'm psyched out of my mind to work with the Val Evans. The Michaels. I mean, we're going to be talking magic, sharing tricks, eventually, maybe we spend the holidays together? I don't know-- I am a little worried about seeing Anthony, he hasn't been returning my texts. And it would be great to talk to him, especially today, because when I get nervous around new people I tend to ramble-- My mom always says, "Be quiet or I'll give you to another family." It sounds less harsh in Vietnamese.

WE REVEAL that the man Holly is talking to is the valet.

VALET

(exhausted)

Ma'am, I'm sorry, you just have to move your car. Employees park in the back.

HOLLY

Oh, sorry! I'll move right now.

Holly quickly gets back into her car and drives off.

10 INT. FRONT ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

10

Holly looks around. She then takes out her phone and texts Anthony: "You here? Just got to palace. Would be great to see you. Miss you." She walks up to a bookshelf with a gargoyle statue on it. She leans towards it.

HOLLY

Abra-Hocus-Pocus-Bette-Midler-cadabra.

The bookshelf slides open and Holly excitedly walks through.

11 INT. STAFF LOUNGE - A LITTLE LATER

11

The magicians and other staff sit as Jake reads announcements. Holly sits in the back of the room.

JAKE

And please stop flushing your never-ending scarves down the toilets. Is it hilarious? Yes. But these pipes are old and our janitor, Bruce, is still missing. So stop doing that. And if anyone hears from Bruce, please call the police.

There's a general murmur of agreement.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Now we have someone new joining us--

Holly jumps up, bursting with excitement and nerves.

HOLLY

Hi! It's me! I'm Holly. Unless, sorry, were you going to introduce someone else?

JAKE

No, just you. So, this is Holly Le--

Holly starts making her way to the front of the room, squeezing past people and bumping into chairs.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Oh, you don't need to come up...
Okay, you're walking to the front.

Holly finally makes it up next to Jake.

HOLLY

Hi! Like Jake said, I'm Holly--

MICHAEL B

Is she the new magician's assistant since Penny's aged out?

PENNY

(quietly, almost to self)
I'm 32.

HOLLY

Nope! I'm the new house magician.

VAL

Wait a minute! Isn't that the psychopath who assaulted my lynx?

JAKE

We did not hire a psychopath, Val.

MICHAEL V

You did it before!

JAKE

We just know that Bruce and his wife are missing--

HOLLY

I'm not a psychopath. The only thing I'm crazy about is magic!

The joke falls flat. There is a deep silence.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

(trying to bounce back)

Anywhoozle, just last weekend I was performing as a wizard for a kid's birthday party, which I loved but I also had to sell my blood to make rent and now that I'm thinking back I really don't think that guy worked for the Red Cross, so who knows where my blood is but, anyway, now I'm here, in front of the most iconic magicians in the world...

(taking a breath)

It's just truly an honor to be considered one of you. Also, it'll be great to perform for an audience that won't pee their pants every ten minutes. Unless I want them to, am I right?

Another deep silence.

JAKE

(sotto, to Holly)

Again, you don't have to be up here.

HOLLY

Well, I just wanted to say that I'm stoked to be here and hopefully, in time, we will all be... look down at your wrists.

Everyone looks down at their wrists to see that Holly has put beaded bracelets on them. Val stares at his, intensely.

MICHAEL V
(reading the beads)
BFFS-4-EVA.

She smiles widely, hoping that the trick wins them over, but everyone just takes them off. Holly looks bummed.

MICHAEL B
Did you take these from one of those kid's parties?

HOLLY
No, I made them for us... It was just supposed to be like a fun--

VAL
(getting up)
I don't like anything being put on my person without my consent. Is this meeting done?

JAKE
Yep. Just remember everyone-- dress rehearsal is after lunch. Great meeting! Everyone was super pleasant as usual.

Everyone files out, leaving Holly slightly embarrassed.

12

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

12

Holly catches up to Val as he leaves the staff lounge.

HOLLY
Um, Mr. Evans? Hey, I just want to say that I'm really sorry about the bracelet thing and... I just love you. Not in a sexual way or anything. Well, sure I've had confusing dreams about you, but I meant, you're one of my idols.

VAL
Oh, well, that makes sense. Holly, as your idol, let me give you some advice: When you're on that stage, you're a god, not a clown. You have the power of magic.
(MORE)

VAL (CONT'D)

The audience should be stunned and terrified for their sanity. I'm worried your little witch routine--

HOLLY

Wizard. I'm a wizard.

VAL

Sure. I'm afraid it's just not up to the caliber that we're used to at the Palace. This is the big leagues, after all. We're not here to make friendship bracelets, we're here to do serious magic and be the best in the world. I mean, I'd like you to fit in here but I'm looking at you and all I see is a silly little girl.

This hits Holly, she deflates.

HOLLY

(small)

Well, the Ministry seemed to be really confident in me--

VAL

And I'm sure they were. But to be honest, I've seen them be confident about so many other magicians, and then after the first performance...

Val makes the "cut throat" gesture.

HOLLY

They kill them.

VAL

No, they fire them. But one guy did die from Legionnaires disease three days later. Life's funny like that.

He leaves Holly mortified and worried.

13

INT. KITCHEN - A LITTLE LATER

13

The kitchen staff preps for tonight's show. Holly finds Anthony rolling silverware sets into napkins.

HOLLY

Hey...

ANTHONY
(barely looking at her)
Hi.

HOLLY
(cautiously)
I've been texting you...

ANTHONY
(sighs, then)
Yeah, sorry. I've just been busy.

HOLLY
Okay... It's just I'm so sorry how
this all went down--

ANTHONY
It's fine, we're fine. I promise.

HOLLY
Okay. 'Cause something weird just
happened-- Val Evans just said that
my wizard act is dumb and he
doesn't think I belong here and the
ministry might kill me or fire me--
I forget, I stopped breathing-- Do
you think I'm just some immature
little girl?

ANTHONY
You do have a lot of Taylor Swift
posters in your apartment.

HOLLY
Women of all ages love Tay!
(then)
It's just... I love my wizard thing
but I wanna prove that I belong
here. Maybe I can try some
dangerous escapes and do stuff with
tigers?

ANTHONY
I don't know. That doesn't really
sound like you.

HOLLY
Yeah, that's the point. I need to
step up and become that tiger lady.

ANTHONY
Sure, I'm actually pretty busy, so
why don't you do what you think is
best, okay? You're the magician.

HOLLY

Okay, but we usually help each other with our performances--

ANTHONY

It's just, if you're gonna be back here you have to wear a hair-net and we're all out, so... I don't want to get into trouble.

Anthony gestures for Holly to leave. He then focuses all his attention on his work, ignoring her. Holly reluctantly exits.

14

INT. PROP ROOM 1 - A LITTLE LATER

14

The room is filled with crates of various magic props. Holly is in a straitjacket, practicing a new trick.

HOLLY

(announcer voice)

Oh no, will she escape in time before falling into the shark tank?

Holly attempts to move her arm over her head but the sleeves don't loosen up like they're supposed to. Holly resets, trying to relax her body and tries again but it doesn't budge. She starts to panic.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Everything's okay. You've just been eaten by sharks. No big deal.

She tries and fails again when Jake enters, carrying a crate.

JAKE

Holly... you okay?

HOLLY

Jake! Yeah, yeah. I'm good. Just chillin'... out, maxin' relaxin' all cool.

JAKE

So, just reciting Fresh Prince lyrics? 'Cause you know this is the room for broken props, right? That's why they're labeled NG. For "no good".

Holly notices everything has "NG" written on them.

HOLLY
(nodding)
Mmmm... mm-hm, mm-hm.

JAKE
Let's get you out of this.

Jake starts to unclasp the back of the jacket.

HOLLY
Usually a guy buys me dinner before
he takes off my straitjacket.

JAKE
What?

HOLLY
Nothing.

JAKE
The clasps always got stuck on this
one, but if you bend forward
first... Yup, then you kind of have
to squat...

HOLLY
(following instructions)
Sure. All the elegant lady moves.

The straitjacket comes off. She shakes her arms, relieved.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Thank you, thank you, thank you.

JAKE
Wow, a "thank you". That's new.

HOLLY
What do you mean?

JAKE
Usually, when I try to "help" the
magicians they scream at me. I'm
not used to anyone being nice.

HOLLY
But I'm not nice! I mean, not just
nice. I'm also... dangerous and
mysterious, or wild and reckless?
What do you think sounds better?

JAKE
Sorry, what is this for?

HOLLY

Um, you know, just changing a few things. Making sure my act is up to the Palace caliber and fits in with everyone else's.

JAKE

Okay, well, I wouldn't sweat it.

HOLLY

I just really don't want to mess up this chance. It's The Magic Palace! All the greats came through here. Trent Drinkwater, Alastor Green--

JAKE

Actually my first week here was Alastor's final show.

HOLLY

Are you serious? He's my hero and basically the reason I got into magic. He inspired me to do the whole wizard thing!

JAKE

I can see that. He was really fun and engaged with the audience a lot. I wish he still worked here.

HOLLY

I genuinely think I would pass out. Like, if I turned the corner and saw him, I would faint.

JAKE

(joking)

Oh I was always fainting around him. That's why he left.

Holly laughs. Then there's a slightly charged beat as they search for what to say next.

HOLLY

So, I'm just gonna--

JAKE

Right. You were probably looking for the working props room, which is down the hall. Purple door.

HOLLY

Great, thanks.

Jake picks up the straitjacket off the ground.

JAKE

Whoa. Why is it so damp?

HOLLY

Um, it was like that when I put it on. NG, you know? Kay, bye!

Holly quickly exits.

15

INT. PROP ROOM 2 - DAY

15

Holly enters the real prop room. It's a more organized than the first room. She then notices a cage of doves.

HOLLY

Ooh... pretty.

Holly approaches the cage carefully. She slowly opens the cage door to reach for one dove but a bunch of doves burst through and fly out an open window in the room.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Doves! No!

Just then, Penny enters and Holly quickly shuts the cage.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Penny! What's uuuuuup?

PENNY

Just grabbing Val's silk cloths. He had them dry cleaned.

Penny goes over to grab hangers with individual silk cloths hanging from each one.

HOLLY

Hey, so... your hair is, like, super shiny... what's your secret?

PENNY

I wash it.

HOLLY

Nice. With like shampoo or--

Penny exits. Holly turns back to the props. In a series of quick cuts we see:

-She hangs up her wizard robe on a costume rack. She looks at it fondly for a beat, then pulls out a flashy sequined vest and tries it on.

-She attempts to swallow a sword but chickens out.

-She walks across fake broken glass but it still hurts and Holly grabs her feet in pain, falling to the ground.

-She tries to "saw" her arm off but as she pushes the button to extend the fake blade, it pops right off and breaks.

-She writes "NG" on a post-it and puts it on the broken saw.

-Holly uses flash fire paper, making a fake dove appear from the fire. Holly looks stoked, proud of herself for pulling off the trick. She looks down, a few embers from the flash fire paper land on the dove, sparking a flame.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Ahhh!

Holly instinctively throws the fake dove. It lands on a pile of wigs nearby, which burst into flames.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Nooooo!

Holly grabs a cape and smothers the fire.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Dammit, dammit, dammit.

She looks down at the cape covering the burnt wigs. Feeling guilty, but not sure what else to do, she slowly backs away and exits the room.

16

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

16

It's lunch time and Holly looks out to the different cliques sitting together: servers, cooks, stagehands and the magicians. It has a very high school cafeteria vibe.

Holly gathers herself and makes a beeline to the magicians table, passing Anthony who glances at her.

MICHAEL B

...Then he had that awful show in Luxembourg.

MICHAEL V

It wasn't Luxembourg.

MICHAEL B

Don't tell me when things aren't
Luxembourg!

HOLLY

(taking a seat)
Hey, you guys talking Luxembourg?

VAL

No, we're talking about Alastor
Green. What a hack. I never thought
he fit in at The Palace.

HOLLY

Oh, Alastor Green?

Seeing this as a chance to finally fit in with the other
magicians, Holly struggles with what to say.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Yeah, he's just... the worst. He's
so cheesy. His whole act was so...
pedestrian.

VAL

(agreeing with Holly)
Exactly. Pedestrian.

MICHAEL B

Can you believe he still uses a
wand? What is this, 1997?

HOLLY

Hah. Yeah. So lame. He should be
using, like... a chainsaw or a...
bag of glass.

VAL

Hm, that might actually be
interesting to see. Good point.

Just then Anthony approaches Holly.

ANTHONY

Hey, can we talk?

The magicians immediately look at Anthony.

VAL

Is this waiter a friend of yours?

Holly starts to panic a little, not wanting to lose the
momentum she's gotten with the magicians.

HOLLY
Ummm.... yeah...
(to Anthony)
Can we maybe talk later?

ANTHONY
I wanted to explain about earlier--

HOLLY
It's just...the magicians and I are
talking and it's not a good time.
Maybe I'll catch you after work?

ANTHONY
Wow... Really, Holly?

HOLLY
What? No, I'm not trying to--

ANTHONY
Guess you're just part of the elite
squad now and I'm just some
"waiter"!

MICHAEL B
Aren't you a waiter though?

Holly gets up and ushers Anthony away from the table.

HOLLY
(keeping her voice down)
Look, I'm really sorry I got the
magician spot over you, but acting
jealous like this--

ANTHONY
Whoa! I am not jealous. At all.

HOLLY
Oh, c'mon, you've been acting like
such a turd face.

ANTHONY
The only reason you got the job is
because the Ministry needed to hire
a woman!

Holly is taken aback. Everyone else reacts -- is that true?

HOLLY
Why would you say that?

ANTHONY

I heard it directly from the Ministry. And they never notice I'm there so I hear everything. They needed to fill their "diversity quota" with a woman and there you were. So, good timing, I guess!

HOLLY

No, they said that my coin trick was impeccable...

ANTHONY

You think they would hire someone just because they saw one trick?

HOLLY

I... Um... I...

She looks to see all eyes are on her. Jake then enters.

JAKE

Hey guys, dress rehearsal.

Off Holly's panicked look - the timing couldn't be worse.

17

INT. BACKSTAGE - LATER

17

Holly, in the sequined vest, looks panicked as she sees The Michaels rehearse. They're wearing the burnt wigs.

18

INT. MAIN STAGE - CONTINUOUS

18

Michael V holds Michael B, who is holding several large swords, in the air for their final pose but almost drops him.

MICHAEL B

Michael! Will you focus? I almost hit my face. MY FACE, Michael.

MICHAEL V

Everything is off! We look ridiculous in these wigs.

MICHAEL B

I'm not the one who burned them!

ANGLE ON Jake, Val, Penny and Simon Rafferty (The Ministry member we've seen before), watching from the audience.

SIMON
(clearing his throat)
That's good! Let's just move on and
see the girl!

The Michaels continue to bicker as they walk off stage.

JAKE
Okay, Holly, you're up.

Holly walks onto the stage with a big smile plastered onto her face, holding a black velvet bag.

HOLLY
Good morning! I mean, evening.
(then, a la Val)
Good evening! And welcome to the...
fire zone!

Holly uses the flash fire paper to make a dove come out of the velvet bag. Her shaky hands fumble and she doesn't pull the dove out in time. The fire singes it and it squeals in pain as it flops onto the stage. Holly looks horrified.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Oh my god! I'm-- Sorry! Sorry! I
can start over.

VAL
Holly, is your whole thing just
murdering animals?

Val smirks as The Michaels laugh at his joke.

HOLLY
No! I'm better than this! It's
just... I've spent the whole day,
changing everything about my act
and what I love to do to show that
I can fit in here but now I don't
even know who I am or what's good
anymore and it doesn't even matter
because I was only hired because
I'm a woman...
(starting to break down)
...and while that seems like a
harmless directive it actually
works against women because then we
just feel like a quota rather than
talented individuals... and I know
I'm good! At least, I thought I
was!

Simon shifts in his seat, looking uncomfortable.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

And I'm trying not to cry, not because of the ugly-cry face, but because it looks bad for women as a whole, which is messed up 'cause there's nothing wrong with emotions. Also, I burned the wigs!

Holly runs off the stage.

VAL

This is the risk you take by hiring a woman. They're very dramatic.

MICHAEL V

We can take over her time slot.

MICHAEL B

We've been working on this trick where I'm legally dead for twenty-five seconds.

JAKE

I think she's just nervous. Let's just see how she does tonight.

SIMON

Yes, I think we should let her perform. If she fails publicly then it won't look bad if we fire her. We can't risk anymore negative press. The Magic Times Blog is on our ass!

END OF ACT TWO

21 INT. WOMEN'S RESTROOM - DAY

21

Holly, still sitting on the floor, grabs some toilet paper nearby and wipes away her smeared make up. We hear the door open.

HOLLY
Jake, really, I'm--

Holly looks up to see that it's Penny, holding a makeup bag and hairbrush.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Penny! Heyyy...

PENNY
Oh, sorry. I can leave, I didn't know you were--

HOLLY
(wiping away tears)
No, it's fine. I just got a bunch of eyelashes in my eye... and I was crying about my life. I'll get out of your way though--

PENNY
No, you're fine.

Penny goes over to the mirror and starts to fix her hair. She takes a beat and then turns to Holly.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Hey, I just wanted to say... I think you're really good.

HOLLY
What... What do you mean?

PENNY
I just mean, Val's been trying to figure out your bracelet trick all day. And he rarely pays attention to the other magicians... or any other person on the planet.

HOLLY
He was? Why would he do that?

Penny hesitates for a second and then sits next to Holly.

PENNY

It was a pretty amazing trick. I mean, the bracelets were really ugly but it was funny and you pulled it off flawlessly. I think he might be a little intimidated by you... which is probably why he's been trying to get into your head.

HOLLY

I think he's just trying to toughen me up--

PENNY

No, he's just being a huge asshole. Like, the biggest asshole you could imagine, that's him. But don't let him get to you. Just go out there and do your weird, goofy, sweet, weird-nerd... weirdo thing. 'Cause you're truly, really good.

HOLLY

Thank you...

PENNY

Also, it's really inspiring to see a woman on stage not being sawed in half. I'm excited for you to be here, no matter how it happened.

Holly, extremely grateful for the encouragement, grabs Penny and hugs her.

HOLLY

Your hair feels like velvet.

PENNY

I know.

They get up. Holly wipes off her face. She takes a good look at herself in the mirror. After a beat, she yanks off the sequined vest, throws it into the toilet and flushes. The bowl immediately starts to fill up with water.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Oh my god, why would you do that?!

HOLLY

I don't know! I was just having a moment! It seemed symbolic somehow. Oh god, the water's getting everywhere!

22 EXT. THE MAGIC PALACE – NIGHT 22

We see cars pulling up to the valet. Guests in formal wear exiting their cars. It's showtime at the Magic Palace!

23 INT. MAIN STAGE – NIGHT 23

The MUSIC CUES and the lights dim.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Introducing the...
(paper shifting)
...Holly Le!

There's a beat, then Holly rushes out onto the stage, dressed in her wizard robe and hat but without the beard.

HOLLY
I heard it's a little boy's
birthday today...
(then, to audience)
Wait, where am I? This isn't right.

ANGLE ON Jake and the other magicians watching from the wings.

JAKE
Is this part of the act or is she
going crazy? Oh, please don't be
going crazy...

HOLLY
Hold up... you're not Jimmy and his
fifth grade buddies!

Audience members look around, unsure of what's happening.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Shoot, all I've got are these dumb
kid tricks. That'll be boring...

Holly grabs a large bag, puts it on a table, and looks in it.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Hmm... you know, maybe I have
something else in here. Something
edgier. More dangerous.

After a moment she takes off her hat to scratch her head and a small bunny sits on top of her head. It quickly hops off and starts hopping around the stage. The audience reacts. Holly puts her wizard hat back on, "not noticing" the bunny.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Hold on... I'll just be a second.

She keeps looking in the bag and takes her hat off again to wipe her forehead. Another bunny appears and hops off her head. The audience gasps, delighted.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Whoa, it's hot in there...

Holly puts her wizard hat back on as the audience laughs.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

What are you guys laughing at--
whoa! Where'd these guys come from?

Holly acts surprised to finally notice the bunnies on stage. The audience shouts at her: Your hat! From your hat!

HOLLY (CONT'D)

What? My-- this hat?

Holly takes off her wizard hat and yet another bunny is there and hops off her head.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Oh my god!

Holly drops her hat and chases the bunnies around the stage.

ANGLE ON Anthony watching intensely as Holly performs. He absentmindedly puts a plate of food on a table.

AUDIENCE MEMBER

I ordered the mozzarella sticks--

ANTHONY

Shhh!

Holly finally manages to gather the bunnies into her bag.

HOLLY

Don't worry. They're safe now. See?

She flips the open bag over but nothing comes out.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Oops, or lost forever in a black
hole somewhere. Don't tell PETA.

The audience laughs and applauds. Holly then goes over and picks up her wizard hat.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Okay, there can't possibly be
anymore animals in here--

As Holly looks into her hat, a flame goes off and a pair of doves fly out of it. Holly coughs up smoke, along with a third smaller bird that flies out of her mouth. The audience laughs again, loving her performance. Holly looks to the side of the stage and sees Jake and Penny smiling at her, proud.

24 INT. BACKSTAGE - SAME TIME

24

Val and the Michaels look out at the stage.

MICHAEL B

The audience is... laughing. Damn.
She's actually good.

MICHAEL V

I know. She's got that cute, nerd
thing going on. Bitch.

Val, clearly jealous, throws his juice on the floor.

VAL

Someone clean this up!

He walks off in a huff.

25 EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

25

Holly, feeling proud, walks towards her car. Anthony, who's also walking out, is about to approach her but stops himself and turns around. Holly then looks behind her and sees Anthony walking away. She starts to go after him but also stops. Both friends not quite ready to forgive each other. Someone taps Holly on the shoulder. She turns to see Val.

VAL

Congratulations. You made it
through a performance. It was cute.

HOLLY

I'm really happy with it. I just
realized I like making people laugh
and seeing them enjoy themselves and
not be terrified for their sanity.

VAL

I guess you made it work. If I
could give you one piece of advice--

HOLLY

No, I'm good. The Ministry said it was one of their most engaging performances in a while, so...

VAL

(tightly)

Well, they probably just didn't want you to burst into tears again.

HOLLY

Actually, I think Simon's exact words were: "Thank god you're not just another sequined-idiot."
Anyway, I'll see you tomorrow, Val!

Holly walks away leaving Val stunned. He then looks down to see another one of Holly's friendship bracelets on his wrist.

VAL

(angry whisper)

How does she do that!?

Holly smiles to herself as she walks away, then freezes when she gets to her car. It's covered in all the doves that escaped before.

HOLLY

Hey, birds.

END OF SHOW