

My Turn

Written By

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Based on, if any

Fantasia - The Sorcerer's Apprentice

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INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - NIGHT

A red record light blinks next to a camera lens. Sounds of clapping and laughter can be heard. A handsome late night talk show host, JOHNNY WAYLAND(40s) stands on a sound stage, beaming at the crowd.

A young redheaded boy, CHARLIE ROSEN (20s) watches from the shadows behind the camera. He holds a cup of coffee in each hand.

JOHNNY WAYLAND

That's our show for tonight, folks!

Johnny raises his hand and takes a bow. A red "applause" light blinks on and off. The audience CLAPS.

A WHISTLE followed by a BELL; the stage lights go off and the house lights flip on. An orchestra of men and women begin running back and fourth across the studio, moving equipment to and fro.

Johnny begins exiting the studio and is stopped by a producer to discuss logistics. Charlie makes his move.

CHARLIE

Excuse me! Excuse me! Sir?

Johnny begins to remove his jacket.

CHARLIE

Had some ideas for the show. Ever heard the one about the piece of--

Without looking at him: Johnny removes a cup of coffee from Charlie's hand and replaces it with his jacket before turning back to the producer to continue their conversation. They walk away.

Charlie stands there with his head held low: a jacket in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other. Crew members speed by him on either side. No one pays him any attention.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO (DRESSING ROOM) - LATER

Jacket in hand: Charlie stands sad and defeated in Johnny's dressing room. He moves to the wardrobe rack to hang the jacket and catches a glimpse of himself in the mirror. He pauses. Stops, and turns toward the mirror. He puts the jacket down on Johnny's chair, peaks his head out of the dressing room door, and looks both ways up and down the hallway: it's empty and quiet.

Charlie puts the jacket on and strikes a pose. He smiles in the mirror.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO

Charlie tip toes his way onto the sound stage: it's empty. He eyes Johnny's chair.

Charlie sits.

From the camera monitor we see him fixing his collar and cuffs as he confidently leans forward in the chair and places his elbows on the table. The monitor screen begins to ripple as we follow him into his imagination...

People are laughing. The lights are bright. The spotlight is on Charlie. He stands and moves to center stage where he takes a bow and begins his monologue:

CHARLIE

We have a great crowd tonight.
Really great crowd...

The audience CLAPS and SCREAMS approvingly.

CHARLIE

Soooo, I ever tell you guys n' gals
the one about the piece of rope?

The crowd ROARS.

CHARLIE

It's one of my favorites. You see:
a piece of rope walks into a bar.
He approaches a stool and climbs to
the top. Oof. When he gets to the
top he orders a dirty martini...
The bartender says, 'What are you
doing here? Get out of here. We
don't serve pieces of rope in this
bar.' -- The piece of rope climbs
down and goes out back in the
alley. He stands there, feeling
all sad and rejected. But wait!
He has an idea! So he ties himself
in a knot and messes up his edges.
There is no way this bartender can
recognize him now! Right? So he
walks back into the bar.
Confidently climbs back up that
stool. And says, 'can I get a
whiskey sour?' -- The bartender

(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

squints at him... And he says,
 'You're not fooling me. You're
 that same goddamned piece of rope
 that walked in here not 5 minutes
 ago. I told you then and I'll tell
 you now. Get out. We don't serve
 your kind here.' ... The piece of
 rope smiles, leans in, and says,
 'No, I'm *a-frayed-knot*.'

The crowd ROARS.

MONTAGE (No Sound)

Charlie finishes his monologue and takes his seat.

Charlie meets and greets his first guest.

The guest makes a joke and Charlie riffs off it.

The crowd cheers.

Charlie shakes hands with his second guest.

The crowd laughs.

Charlie introduces the musical guest and they play.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO (HALLWAY) - NIGHT

The show is over and Charlie is hustled by bodyguards through crowded hallways as cast, crew, and producers congratulate him on a great show. A young intern asks for his autograph. Charlie stops and signs his notebook.

CHARLIE

Keep up the good work. One day you
 could be just like me.

CHLICK CLICK as the back entrance doors fly open.

EXT. TELEVISION STUDIO (ALLEYWAY EXIT) - NIGHT

Charlie steps out to a crowd of flashbulbs and inquiring reporters. The bodyguards block them and rush him into a private car: slamming the door shut.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Music is loud. The lights are low. Men and women of all shapes and sizes dance to the beat. Charlie sits in a VIP booth surrounded by beautiful women and doting assistants.

SARAH

I loved your show tonight. God,
you're so funny!

CHARLIE

Thanks Sarah.

Charlie pops the cork and pours the champagne.

CHARLIE

Come celebrate James! Couldn't
have done it without ya!

Charlie closes his eyes and smiles as he takes a moment to let it all sink in. He leans back into the sofa, takes a breath, and opens his eyes: he notices a security camera in the corner of the ceiling with a blinking red light.

Something isn't right.

The screen begins to ripple and the nightclub fades away as it's replaced by a cold hard table with a cheek lying in a puddle of drool. Charlie jerks his head up. He fell asleep! He wipes the drool off his mouth with his sleeve and rubs his eyes. Through a sharpening blur he begins to see a blinking red light.

The camera is still recording.

Charlie runs towards it and fumbles as he scrambles to find a way to turn it off. His hands shake as he pushes button after button, to no avail. Finally, in one decisive move, he rips open the tape deck and pulls the cassette out. Ribbons fly everywhere as the camera continues to eat the tape.

EXT. TELEVISION STUDIO (ALLEYWAY EXIT) - NIGHT

Johnny is walking back to the studio and enters the building through the back entrance.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - NIGHT

Charlie is now knee-deep in a pile of tape as he throws his arms into the air and things become more and more tangled.

INTERCUT BETWEEN CHARLIE AND JOHNNY

Johnny continues up the hallway.

Charlie tries to free the tape from the camera by pulling on it: the tripod begins to tip.

Johnny checks his dressing room and continues forward.

Charlie's face is red and his are fingers wrapped in tape. He gives a decisive yank and the camera swings around and smacks him in the face: the tripod tips...

Johnny walks into the main television studio to find Charlie lying on the floor in a tangled ball of magnetic tape. He is trapped under the weight of a fallen tripod. He laughs.

JOHNNY

Is that *my* jacket?

CHARLIE

I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I didn't mean, I mean I know I shouldn't hav--

JOHNNY

Well... Can I have it back?

CHARLIE

(mortified)

I can't get up.

Johnny lifts the camera off Charlie and frees him from his tangled mess. Flustered and red: Charlie scrambles to remove the jacket.

CHARLIE

I'm so sorry. I didn't realize the tape was recording and then -- I've ruined Everything.

JOHNNY

No worries.

Johnny reaches into his jacket pocket and removes a pair of house keys.

JOHNNY

Hey, would you do me a favor and hang this in my dressing room on your way out?

CHARLIE

But the tape. The show...

JOHNNY

What'd you think this was? The 90s? Jeez man, everything is backed up digitally these days.

CHARLIE

Oh

JOHNNY

Besides, seeing this hilarious mess
you've made was well worth it.

CHARLIE

Oh, thanks... I think.

Johnny smiles, chuckles to himself, and begins to walk away.

Charlie stands there, jacket in hand, frozen in awe.

As he opens the door to exit the studio, Johnny stops and
turns back to Charlie:

JOHNNY

By the way... I don't think I ever
caught your name.

CUT TO BLACK