

THE AMAZING INVENTION

A ONE ACT COMEDY

by Theodore J. Nottingham

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CAST

THOMAS (an all around good guy)

HERB (a brilliant nerd)

KATY (a sweet, kind, and blind young lady)

MR. BIGFOOT (a really mean fellow who wears a tuxedo and has one extra-large foot)

JACK (two thugs who make a classic comedy team) MACK

NAPOLEON

CLEOPATRA

VIKING

SETS

Herb's garage

Mr. Bigfoot's living room

Napoleon's living quarters

Cleopatra's ship cabin

Lights FADE UP on Herb garage. The set is a mishmash of strange things: tools, cords, odd boxes, etc. Center stage is the Machine, a rickety large box covered with blinking lights and attached to a small engine. The whole thing is shaking and smoking. There is a door upstage right and an exit area upstage left.

HERB appears from underneath the Machine, covered with grease. He wears the mechanic's overalls and a multi-colored T-shirt. Herb is an odd fellow, a brilliant "nerd" with thick glasses. He sips a soda and prepares to go back to work when there is a KNOCK at the door. He quickly covers the Machine with an old blanket, grabs a "Popular Mechanics" magazine, and jumps into a lounge chair.

THOMAS enters. He is our handsome, all-around good guy lead.

THOMAS: How ya doin' today, Herb?

HERB: Hey, Thomas! What's happenin'?

(Thomas smells the smoke.) THOMAS: What are you up to now, Einstein?

HERB: Me? Nothing, nothing...I'm just sitting around.

THOMAS: Come on, don't try to fool your old friend. I've been around you since the third grade, remember? I was standing right here when you invented the spitball boomerang.

HERB: That was a lost cause. Landed me in the principal's office. I was out for a week.

THOMAS: Yeah, but it got you a blue ribbon at the science fair.

HERB: I still think they did that to keep me from marketing it.

THOMAS: Well, they probably saved the public school system. So tell me, what are you working on now?

(Herb scurries about the stage, agitated.)

HERB: I really can't talk about it, Tommy.

THOMAS: What's the big deal? I'm not gonna sell your secret to the enemy. Not for less than a hundred bucks, anyway. (Herb glares at him) I'm just kidding! Boy, you're awfully jumpy. Must be something pretty important under that blanket.

(Herb hurries to Machine and stands in front of it.)

HERB: What makes you think there's something under this blanket?

THOMAS: That's how you hid your banana split duplicating machine. And your exam decoder. And your skateboard shredder. And your...

HERB: Okay, okay, I confess. There is a new invention under here. But it's not like anything I've made before. It's very...special to me. (He lunges toward Thomas) I want your solemn oath that you won't tell anybody about it!

THOMAS: Sure.

HERB: I mean it Thomas Osborn! Promise me on your honor as a college graduate that you won't tell a soul about it.

THOMAS (seriously): I give you my word.

HERB: Not even to Katy.

THOMAS: Not even to Katy?

HERB: That's right.

THOMAS: Herb, I don't hide anything from Katy.

HERB: There's a first time to everything.

THOMAS: I don't want to withhold anything from her. We're going to be married some day!

HERB: Well, you might as well start now.

THOMAS: That's not the kind of marriage we have in mind! She's my best friend, Herb! It's all or nothing for us. That's the way we both want it.

HERB (walking away): Then I won't tell you about the most incredible machine ever invented by the human mind.

THOMAS (smiling): Aren't you getting carried away with yourself, Herby my friend?

HERB: No sirreee! I may be just little weird Herby to you, Herb the Nerd as they called me in school. But someday the world will know me as Sir Herbert Maxwell!

THOMAS: Sir Herbert?

HERB: I expect to be knighted. After I get the Nobel Peace

Prize for scientific achievement.

THOMAS: But you're not even English! The Queen doesn't knight country boys from the Midwest.

HERB: Why not?

THOMAS: Because your ancestors made her ancestors look bad when they kicked them out of the colonies.

HERB: Well, maybe she'll forgive and forget. (He puts a lid from a jar on his chest) Someday, you'll see me at a dinner party wearing my decorations.

THOMAS: You're dreaming.

HERB: Why shouldn't I be knighted? They knight eccentric actors who'd drink the Thames River if it had alcohol in it. Why shouldn't they knight the man who finally invented the Time Machine?

THOMAS (amused): The time machine? They've already invented the clock, Herby.

HERB: Not that time machine, dummy. THE Time Machine! The one H. G. Wells

dreamt about. The one humanity's been waiting for ever since Adam first wanted to put the apple back.

THOMAS: You mean...You've invented a machine that will take us back in time?

HERB (with a big smile): Yep!

THOMAS: That's impossible! I don't believe it!

(Herb pulls off the blanket with a grandiose gesture.)

HERB: TA DA!

(Thomas stares at the odd-looking machine in astonishment.)

THOMAS: That's your time machine? (He laughs) You think you're gonna win the Nobel Peace Prize for this? Maybe the Nobel Piece of Junk Prize! (big laugh)

HERB (hurt): Hey, this is the best I could do with what I've got around the house.

THOMAS (laughing): Didn't you forget the kitchen sink?

(Herb pulls a chair from behind the machine.)

HERB: Have a seat right here, and I'll show you the greatest show on earth!

(Thomas stops laughing abruptly.)

THOMAS: Well...(Looks at watch) I can't really stay.

HERB (defiantly): You scared?

THOMAS: I'm not scared of anything! Least of all of that futuristic hot dog stand!

HERB: Hot dog stand!! Check this out!

(He pushes buttons. The Machine lights up. A loud noise comes from inside of it. Thomas jumps away from it.)

THOMAS: Turn that thing off! Turn it off!

(Herb turns it off.)

HERB: You give me a time in history, or a historical character you want to meet, and I'll send you there in ten seconds.

THOMAS: That can't be! It can't be done!

HERB: That's what they said to Alexander Graham Bell, the Wright brothers, Thomas Edison...

THOMAS: But no one has ever done it before. Besides, it doesn't make sense. The

past is gone.

HERB: Oh yeah? Let me give you a quick lesson in the nature of reality, Thomas. You see, time is the measure of motion. If you were to represent time on paper, you'd have to draw a spiral. The three dimensions of time can be regarded as the continuation of dimensions of space, such as the fourth, fifth and sixth dimensions. A six dimensional space is a Euclidean continuum. Time is the boundary of our senses. Six dimensional space is the world as it really is. So you see, the only time we know and feel is along the fourth dimension. But there are also parallel and perpendicular times. So the line of the direction of time can be defined as the line of the actualisation of one possibility out of multiple possibilities. The sixth dimension is the actualisation of these other possibilities. I'm plugging into the sixth dimension, basically. Got that?

THOMAS: I guess so.

HERB: Now that you understand that, you can see how simple it is to calculate the mathematical relationship of the spherical parallels. The only trouble is precision. I can't quite get the exact times down.

THOMAS: Have you used it yet?

HERB: You mean, have I traveled back in time? Not exactly.

THOMAS: Not exactly?

HERB: I'm looking for a...guinea pig. Got any suggestions?

THOMAS: Don't look at me that way! Of course I don't have any suggestions. Nobody in their right mind would try this experiment.

HERB: That's what I mean. Do you know anyone who's not all there?

THOMAS: Yeah...You!

HERB: I'm the inventor. I can't take a chance with my life. I something went wrong, there wouldn't be anybody to fix it.

THOMAS: Well, if you won't try it, how can you expect anyone else to?

HERB: Because human greed will try anything.

THOMAS: I don't get it.

HERB: Don't you realize what a machine like this could do for someone with no scruples? Imagine. You can talk to anyone who ever lived. Like...I don't know...Say, Attila the Hun.

THOMAS: Why would I want to talk to Attila the Hun?

HERB: Well, if you wanted to know what it took to conquer the world for instance.

THOMAS: A lot of help he would be with his little horse in the nuclear age!

HERB: He might teach you how to control great numbers of people, how to get rid of the right people...

THOMAS: He'd start by getting rid of me!

HERB: How about going to see an old Apache sorcerer who knows where to dig for gold?

THOMAS: He'd probably tell me to dig up San Francisco! It's just not practical, Herb. Your machine doesn't serve any useful purpose.

HERB: Yes it does! I haven't figured out what, but I'm sure it's gotta be good for something. Somebody's gonna give me good money for my baby here. (He taps on it affectionately)

THOMAS: Better not lean on it. Looks like it'll fall apart if you breath on it too hard.

HERB: Don't let appearances fool you.

(Thomas looks at his watch.)

THOMAS: Katy's waiting for me. See you later, Mr. Mad Scientist.

HERB: You don't think it works, do you? Well, let me show you something.

(He pushes buttons. Noise and smoke burst from Machine.)

HERB: Not only can it send you back in time, it can also bring someone from the past into the present!

THOMAS (worried): What do you think you're doing?

HERB: I'm gonna prove to you that my invention works!

THOMAS: You're not...you're not doing what I think you're doing?

(Light FLASHES upstage left. A brutal Viking suddenly appears

stage left. He is eating a chicken leg. He looks around, bored. He examines some of the tools near him and grunts. The Viking sees Herb and grunts several times. Herb, terrified, grunts back, hoping to appease him. The Viking pulls out his ax and lets out a war cry.)

THOMAS: Push the button, Herby! (Herb is too frightened to move) Push the button!

(The Viking rushes toward Herb who runs behind the Machine. They dance around it comically as the Viking tries to catch him. Herb trips and falls. Just as the Viking is about to strike him with his ax, Thomas knocks him over the head with a bat. The Viking stumbles around stage, grunting. He disappears backstage. Thomas turns to Herb and threatens him with the bat.)

THOMAS: Push the button, Herb!

(Herb hurries to Machine and pushes buttons. A FLASH of light appears upstage left. Herb smiles sheepishly at Thomas.)

HERB: I told you it worked.

THOMAS: Great! That's just great! So you can conjure up bloodthirsty vickings in your garage! Congratulations, Herb! You've made the world a better place.

HERB: I thought you'd see it my way.

(Thomas heads for the door.)

THOMAS: If you want my advice, junk the thing before somebody gets hurt.

HERB (horrified): Junk it? Are you crazy? This is the most incredible invention since...

THOMAS: Since Frankenstein.

HERB: You wouldn't know a great scientific achievement if you stepped in it!

THOMAS: It almost stepped on you, remember? (He crosses to Herb and puts his hand on his shoulder) Herb, I know you're a...a genius. I've known that since third grade when I saw that spitball boomerang fly back into your hand. I've admired all your inventions and I'm proud to be the first one you show them to. But this...this is going a little too far. The world doesn't need a gadget like this. It's great in science fiction books and at the movies, but that's where it should stay. There are enough nuts in the world as it is. We don't need to call more of them out of the past. (Herb lowers his head, dejected) Don't be discouraged, Herb. Maybe you will win the Nobel Peace Prize some day. But not for this. Make something more useful. Like...a vacuum cleaner that runs by itself.

HERB (pouting): The Queen won't make me a knight for a vaccuum cleaner!

THOMAS: No, I suppose not.

HERB (crossing to Machine): Maybe I'll just go back in the past and becomes a knight!

THOMAS (stopping him): Don't be silly, Herby. You wouldn't even be able to lift one of their swords, let alone get on a horse! Just be yourself, Herb.

HERB: Why should I want to be Herb the Nerd?

THOMAS: Because it's better than being Herb the dead Nerd. Cheer up, friend. I'll tell you what. You dismantle this machine of yours and Katy and I will take you out to the best restaurant in town.

HERB: Can I order a hot fudge banana split?

THOMAS: Sure!

HERB: As the main course?

THOMAS: Why not.

(Thomas crosses to the door.)

THOMAS: We'll pick you up tonight. Wear a tie.

(He exits. Herb looks sadly at his Machine.)

HERB: I can't destroy you. You're the best thing I've ever come up with. (He picks up some tools) Maybe if I tighten you up a bit you'll work better.

Herb disappears behind Machine. JACK the thug, a mean-looking man in trenchcoat and wearing sunglasses, pops his head up upstage center as though looking through a window. He smiles and disappears. Lights FADE OUT.

SCENE 2 The living room of mean Mr. Bigfoot. Everything is dark, eerie. A large lazyboy chair is center stage, its back to the audience. MACK the thug, wearing sunglasses and trenchcoat, is playing trivial pursuit at a card table stage left. He is not very bright. There is a door upstage right.

MR. BIGFOOT (unseen in lazyboy chair): Is he back yet?

MACK: No, sir, he isn't. Should be anytime now.

(A white-gloved hand holding a cigarette on a long cigarette- holder appears from chair.)

MR. BIGFOOT (unseen): If he's late again, I'm going to send him back to the penitentiary.

MACK: Please, sir, don't do that. I'm about to beat him at trivial pursuit for the first time in two years. (There is a KNOCK at the door) Here he is!

(Mack hurries to door and opens it. Jack enters.)

MACK (whispering to Jack): You're two minutes late. Mr. Bigfoot almost sent you home.

JACK: Oh no...We haven't finished our game yet. (With a devilish smile) And I'm

gonna beat you again, pal.

MACK (angry): Oh yeah?

JACK (defiantly): Yeah!

MR. BIGFOOT (unseen): Boys!

(The chair swivels around. **MR. BIGFOOT** is in a tuxedo. One of his feet is much larger than the other. He is evil-looking, with big eyebrows and mustach.)

MR. BIGFOOT: Let's not start that again, okay?

JACK/MACK: Yes sir, Mr. Bigfoot.

MR. BIGFOOT: What's the news, Jack?

JACK: Well, sir, your brilliant powers of deduction were right again.

MR. BIGFOOT: Of course they were!

JACK: It seems that the disturbance of molecular fields which you discovered on the radarscope was in fact a movement through time.

MR. BIGFOOT: I knew it!

(He rubs his hands and crosses his legs. His foot sticks out comically. Jack pulls out a "detector" which looks like a TV remote control.)

JACK: I have located the source of this disturbance with your handy delux portable detector system which you put together last week.

MR. BIGFOOT: So who's the genius who finally invented the time machine?

JACK: Well, he doesn't look much like a genius, sir. In fact, he looks like the world's biggest nerd.

MACK: I thought you held the title, Jack.

(Jack glares at him.)

MR. BIGFOOT (standing): No nerd could possibly invent a time machine!

JACK: I'm no judge of character, sir, but I sure wouldn't pick him for Mr. Smarty Pants of the year.

MR. BIGFOOT: Are you sure you went to the right place?

JACK: Oh yes sir. I saw it for myself.

MR. BIGFOOT (excited): You saw it?

JACK: Saw it as plain as I can see your foot, sir.

MR. BIGFOOT: Leave my foot of this!

MACK: What did it look like?

JACK: A cardboard computer with blinking lights hooked to a VW engine.

MR. BIGFOOT (angered): I don't have time for jokes!

JACK (frightened): No soke, jir. I mean, no joke, sir. That's what it was. He couldn't get fifty cents for it at a pawnshop. But it works!

MACK: How do you know?

JACK: I saw it with my own eyes.

MR. BIGFOOT (excited as a little boy): What did you see? What did you see?

JACK: I saw him bring a viking out of the past right into his garage. Apparently the machine works both ways.

MR. BIGFOOT: A viking?

MACK: With horns and all?

JACK: That's right. He wasn't six feet from me. I could smell him even. Wewyeee! I guess they hadn't discovered soap ack then.

MR. BIGFOOT: You mean to tell me that this cardboard box brought a man a thousand years out of the past?

JACK: That's right, Mr. Bigfoot, sir.

(Mr. Bigfoot crosses downstage, rubbing his hands with glee. He lets out an evil snicker.)

MR. BIGFOOT: The world will soon be mine! I've waited a long time for this moment. With this machine, I can become the most powerful, the richest, most famous man on earth! I could even get my foot fixed! (He turns to his men) I want that machine! I want it! I want it!

MACK: Sure thing, Mr. B.

JACK: What do we do with the kid?

MR. BIGFOOT: Throw him in the river with the biggest block of concrete you can find.

JACK: The old Bigfoot special, eh?

MR. BIGFOOT: No, that's not good enough. I want you to bury him at the bottom of the river.

MACK: You want us to dig a hole under water? Far out!

JACK: How are we suppose to do that?

MR. BIGFOOT: Get some diver's gear.

JACK: With the budget you've given us, we'd be lucky to get a pair of flipflops at K-Mart!

MR. BIGFOOT: Then learn how to hold your breath.

MACK: I can hold mine for a whole minute! I learned how to do that to make my mommy mad when I was a teenager.

JACK: Can't we just put him in a sack and forget about it?

MR. BIGFOOT: A guy who can invent the time machine can figure out how to get out of a sack.

JACK: Not this one. He couldn't find his way out of a paper bag.

MR. BIGFOOT: Well, I'm not taking any chances.

MACK: Say, I just thought of something.

JACK: You're kidding!

MACK: No, really.

JACK: I'm speechless.

MACK: How are you gonna know how the machine works if we get rid of the inventor?

JACK: What a dumb thought!

MR. BIGFOOT: Good point.

JACK: What a great thought!

MACK: See, I can think! I can think!

MR. BIGFOOT: We must capture him alive. I want you to bring him and his machine to me.

JACK: They won't both fit in the trunk of my honda.

MACK: We could tie the machine on the top of the car.

JACK: Sure, and let everybody see it.

MACK: Oh... We could tie the kid on the roof!

JACK: Now that's really sharp, Mack. Let's give him a hand. (He smacks him on the back of the head)

MR. BIGFOOT: On second thought, you two would end up bungling the whole thing. Let's go pay this young man a visit.

MACK: What should we wear for the occasion?

JACK: Be sure to put on some socks. You don't want to compete with the viking.

MR. BIGFOOT: Take your weapons, boys. This is serious business. And don't forget the bullets this time! (He puts on a large, black top hat) Let's go, boys!

They exit. The two thugs get stuck in the doorway and comically fight their way through it.

SCENE 3

Lights FADE UP on Herb's garage. Herb is under the Machine banging on metal with a hammer. There is a KNOCK at the door. Thomas and KATY enter. Katy is a sweet young lady who happens to be blind. Herb comes out from under the Machine.

HERB: Hello there, Katy.

KATY: Hi, Herby! How are you doing?

HERB: Just fine. How 'bout yourself?

KATY: I feel great. Tom took me to the zoo today.

HERB (surprised): He did?

KATY: Don't be so surprised, Herb. Blind people can enjoy the zoo also, you know. We do real fine on four senses.

HERB: You're one in a million, Katy. I don't know anyone who could have accepted it so well.

KATY: Accidents happen. I can't feel sorry for myself for ever.

HERB: I don't think I've ever met a more courageous person.

THOMAS: She's pretty special. (He puts his arm around her) Say, weren't you suppose to clean up? We're taking you to the best restaurant in town.

(Herb hurries over to a table and throws an already noosed tie over his T-shirt.)

HERB: I'm all set.

KATY: You look great, Herby.

HERB: Thank you, Katy.

THOMAS: Don't you have a jacket?

Herb grabs a multi-colored jacket from out of the mess surrounding him. They exit.

After a moment, Mr. Bigfoot and the two thugs appear upstage left. They sneak into the garage one at a time. Mack trips and crashes into one of the junkpiles.

JACK: Shhh!

(Jack and Mack help Mr. Bigfoot onto the stage, having trouble with his weight.)

MR. BIGFOOT: Where is it? Where is it?

JACK: Right here, Mr. B.

(Mr. Bigfoot throws off the blanket covering the Machine.)

MR. BIGFOOT: What's this?

JACK: The time machine.

MR. BIGFOOT: You gotta be kidding.

MACK: What's this button for?

(He pushes a button. Noise and smoke emanates from the Machine.)

JACK: Keep your hands off that thing!

MR. BIGFOOT (examining machine): This is so simple! Anyone with a brilliant scientific mind could figure this out. (He pushes buttons, laughing) Shall we try it, boys?

JACK: Not for me, thank you.

MACK: I haven't had dinner yet.

MR. BIGFOOT: Cowards! Let's try these coordinates.

JACK (very nervous): With all due respect, sir, shouldn't you wait until the inventor comes back?

MR. BIGFOOT: Five hundred thirty-two point six two one to the square root of pie. Darn it, I'm drawing a blank. What's five times three?

MACK: I know! Eighteen. (To Jack) Didn't know I could add that fast, did you?

JACK: Five times three is fifteen, you airhead!

MR. BIGFOOT: Right! Fifteen to the power of...Eh! Eh! I'm so smart! (Lights on Machine blink) We're going to pay a visit to my hero, boys.

MACK: You mean...We're going to go see Roy Rogers?

MR. BIGFOOT: Napoleon.

MACK: Napoleon? The cook at Mama's Pizza Parlor?

MR. BIGFOOT: No, stupid. The Napoleon. Napoleon Bonaparte.

MACK: Can't say that I've met the man.

JACK: Of course you haven't. He's been dead for nearly two hundred years.

MACK: Well, I hope he's been well preserved. Otherwise I'll lose my appetite.

JACK: Hopeless! Hopeless!

MR. BIGFOOT: You're about to meet one of the great men of history. He victoriously slaughtered thousands of people. And he is going to teach me the secret of his success!

(He pushes buttons. There is a FLASH of light upstage left. Lights FADE OUT abruptly.)

SCENE 4

Scenery from garage set is moved upstage. Spotlight FADES UP on an antique sofa center stage. NAPOLEON is sleeping on it, snoring loudly. The "Marseillaise" is heard faintly in the distance.

Mr. Bigfoot and the two thugs enter upstage right, on tiptoes. Their hair is disheveled from a strong wind. They cross downstage, looking rather worried. They haven't spotted the man on the sofa.

MACK: I feel a little funny.

JACK: You just went through a molecular transposition. Just be glad you're all back in place.

(Mack checks his ears and nose.)

MACK: I'm all here. But where is here?

MR. BIGFOOT: Quiet! I hear something.

(They listen. The sound of snoring is heard.)

MACK: I know that sound!

JACK: You should. You're the king of snores! You oughta be in the Guinness Book of Records.

MR. BIGFOOT: Look! That's him!

MACK (looking the wrong way): Who's him?

JACK: He's him.

MACK (to Jack): And who's he?

JACK: Him!

MACK (seeing Napoleon): Oh...

MR. BIGFOOT: There he is in all his glory. The great Napoleon.

JACK (approaching sofa): Old Nap's taking a nap.

MACK (pulling on Napoleon's sock): Can I have your autograph?

(Jack grabs him and glares at him.)

MR. BIGFOOT: Check the windows. There must be soldiers nearby.

(The two thugs go to curtain line and look out imaginary window. Mr. Bigfoot looks down at Napoleon.)

MR. BIGFOOT (with admiration): My hero...

(Napoleon lets out a big snore.)

JACK: There's a dozen guys with bayonets and funny hats out there.

MACK: I counted another ten in the courtyard. Not including the horses.

MR. BIGFOOT: We haven't got much time. (He sits on edge of sofa and shakes Napoleon) Napoleon...Oh, Napoleon.

(Napoleon wakes up in a haze.)

NAPOLEON: Qu'est ce que c'est? Laissez moi dormir.

(He turns over to go back to sleep.)

MR. BIGFOOT: Wake up, your emperorship

(Napoleon jumps up.)

NAPOLEON (heavy French accent): English! What do you want from me?

MR. BIGFOOT: We came to talk to you. We're from the future.

NAPOLEON: The future?

MACK: Yeah, like long after you're dead.

NAPOLEON: Visitors from the future! How interesting. Are you writing my biography?

MR. BIGFOOT: Well, no, not exactly. But we want to know how you did it.

NAPOLEON: How I did what?

JACK: How you went from a little Corsican lieutenant to emperor of France.

MACK: I know that one. He killed a lot of people, right?

NAPOLEON: How I became emperor?

MR. BIGFOOT: Yes. What is the key to your success? I've got to know.

(Napoleon thinks for a moment. He suddenly begins to whimper. The three look at each other, surprised. Mack gives him a handkerchief.)

MR. BIGFOOT (in a consoling voice): Hey, being the mightiest emperor in Western history isn't so bad, is it?

NAPOLEON: Look where it got me!

MACK (looking around): Well, it's a little gawdy. I'd prefer simpler furniture, myself.

MR. BIGFOOT: What do you mean, where it got you? You're a legend in your own time.

NAPOLEON: That is right. I am a legend. A living relic.

MACK (with French accent): A rrrelic?

JACK: A relic, dummy.

MACK: Oh, a relic...like an old piece of bone or something.

MR. BIGFOOT: I don't understand, sir. How can you feel so bad about having so much?

(Napoleon stands up, outraged.)

NAPOLEON: Having so much? Are you trying to make fun of Napoleon?

MR. BIGFOOT: Not at all. You're my favorite tyrant in all of history! I'd give

anything to be like you.

NAPOLEON: To be like me? Do you know what it is like to have experienced glorious years of conquest, the love of countless Frenchmen, and great dinner parties at court, and then...to be locked away on a tiny island in the middle of the ocean!

MR. BIGFOOT: I'm confused.

NAPOLEON: How did you get here?

MACK: Good question.

(Napoleon looks out imaginary window at curtain line.)

NAPOLEON: Where is your boat?

MR. BIGFOOT: Our boat? Who needs a boat in Paris?

NAPOLEON: We're not in Paris! Why do you torture me with my memories? Are you trying to drive me insane? Do you work for Wellington?

MACK: Beef Wellington?

MR. BIGFOOT (apologetically): He's not big on history.

MACK (insulted): I know all about history! Washington, Lincoln, the Lone Ranger...But what does beef Wellington have to do with anything?

JACK: General Wellington, dummy! The guy who beat the pants off Frenchy here.

NAPOLEON: Isn't it bad enough to banish me to this boring island far from all civilization? To strip me of all my glory and fun? Were you not satisfied with Waterloo?

MR. BIGFOOT: This is the isle of Saint Helena! Where they brought you to die in humiliation and defeat.

NAPOLEON: Are you trying to rub it in? Guards! Guards! Get these men out of my room, s'il vous plait! (As he says this, he puts his hand in his vest)

MACK: So that's what you got in there! Silver plates!

JACK (nervous): I think we'd better go!

(Mr. Bigfoot pulls out remote control.)

JACK: Hurry, Mr. B.! The guys with the bayonets and funny hats are heading this way. They don't look real friendly.

(Napoleon sinks down onto sofa, his head in his hands. Mr. Bigfoot stares at him, astonished.)

MR. BIGFOOT: My dreams are shattered. I always wanted to be like him. But look at him! This is the man who crowned himself emperor! Boy, am I disillusioned!

NAPOLEON: Josephine! Take me home! Take me home!

JACK: You'd better get us out of here, sir. They're coming up the stairs!

(Mr. Bigfoot pushes buttons on remote control.)

MR. BIGFOOT: I...I forgot to read the instructions on how to get back.

JACK: That's just wonderful!

(Mack crosses to Mr. Bigfoot.) **MACK:** I'll figure it out, sir.

JACK: No! Don't let him touch it!

(Lights FLASH upstage left. Lights FADE OUT abruptly.)

SCENE 5

Sofa is moved upstage right. Several barrels are downstage center. Egyptian MUSIC fades up. Spotlight FADES UP on the three companions huddled downstage center. They are in the cabin of a ship.

MACK: This isn't the garage!

JACK: You can say that again! I told you not to push the buttons! We don't even know what time in history we're in.

MR. BIGFOOT: I think we're on board a ship.

MACK: A ship! Great! I've never been on a ship before.

JACK: What kind of a ship?

MR. BIGFOOT (worried): I don't know.

CLEOPATRA enters upstage right. She is in a colorful bathrobe, slippers and curlers. She wears heavy make-up for the Egyptian look.

CLEOPATRA: Hey you! Bow when you're in my presence!

MACK: Who's the dame?

JACK: I don't know, but she doesn't look like she's in a good mood. We'd better humor her.

(They bow awkwardly.)

CLEOPATRA: Where's Antony?

MR. BIGFOOT: I...

CLEOPATRA: Speak up! Where did that little Roman sneak off to now?

MACK: Maybe he went for a swim.

CLEOPATRA: Would you like me to feed you to my pet crocodile?

MACK: Not especially.

CLEOPATRA: Then answer me, swine!

MR. BIGFOOT: Nobody calls Mr. Bigfoot and his boys swine!

CLEOPATRA: How dare you talk to Cleopatra that way!

(They are stunned.)

MR. BIGFOOT: Cleopatra? The Cleopatra from Egypt?

MACK: Elizabeth Taylor looked more like Cleopatra than Cleopatra.

JACK: I've seen better looking princesses at the drug store.

CLEOPATRA: Who is this Elibazeth? Is she trying to claim my throne?

MACK: Depends on what Antony looks like.

CLEOPATRA (pulling out dagger): You are Octavian's spies, aren't you?

JACK: I've never met a lady who carries a knife in her bathrobe before.

CLEOPATRA: Tony! Tony, where are you?

MACK: Tony?

JACK: Yeah, the Roman general.

MACK: You mean, "friends, romans, countrymen" and all that jazz?

JACK: Right.

(Cleopatra approaches them, ready to fight.)

CLEOPATRA: I'll take on all three of you!

JACK: I guess women's lib started a long time ago.

MR. BIGFOOT: Easy now. We're not here to make trouble.

MACK: We're just passing through.

CLEOPATRA: How did you get into my quarters?

MACK: We didn't touch your money!

JACK: She means the quarters of her ship, stupid!

MACK: Oh. Well, you see, I pushed this little orange button and...

CLEOPATRA: I'm going to scratch your eyes out!

JACK: Real sweetie, ain't she!

MR. BIGFOOT: Listen, Cleopatra. My name is Xavier W. Bigfoot, criminal extraordinaire. Here's my card.

CLEOPATRA: Don't come any closer!

MR. BIGFOOT: We're traveling through history. And we got here by accident. But I've always wanted to meet you. I love excessively rich people.

MACK: You are excessively rich, aren't you?

CLEOPATRA: Well, I do pretty well.

MR. BIGFOOT: I was wondering...Is there any way we could have some of it? Just a diamond or two.

CLEOPATRA: So you are thieves!

MR. BIGFOOT: We could trade. How would you like to know the future?

CLEOPATRA: You can prophecy?

MR. BIGFOOT: No, but I watch the six o'clock news. I'm an informed citizen.

JACK: We can tell you what's going to happen to you and Tony.

(Cleopatra pulls a diamond from her finger.) CLEOPATRA: I will give you this diamond if you tell me our fate. Will Antony be emperor of Rome? More importantly, will I be empress?

JACK: Well..

MR. BIGFOOT: Let me handle this.

(He holds out his hand for the diamond.)

CLEOPATRA: No! Tell me first.

MR. BIGFOOT: No diamond, no foretelling.

MACK (sniffing the air): Say...Does anybody smell smoke?

JACK: I think the ship's on fire!

CLEOPATRA: Octavian has attacked! Tell me quickly, will I be queen of the world?

MR. BIGFOOT: Sorry, Cleo. You're out of luck.

CLEOPATRA: I want to be queen of the world! I want to! I want to! My Daddy told me I would be!

MR. BIGFOOT: This is the end of the line, darlin'.

JACK: For us too if we don't get out of here.

(Mr. Bigfoot pulls out remote control.)

MACK: Let me try.

JACK: Don't you dare touch that thing!

CLEOPATRA: Why can't I be queen of the world? I deserve it!

MR. BIGFOOT: Don't worry. History will remember you.

CLEOPATRA (hopeful): My greatness will not be forgotten?

MR. BIGFOOT: Your nose.

CLEOPATRA: My nose?

MR. BIGFOOT: Your nose will be remembered for being cute.

CLEOPATRA: MY NOSE!!

MR. BIGFOOT: Sorry, Charly. I guess you can't have it all. So long.

(There is a FLASH upstage left. Lights FADE OUT.)

CLEOPATRA: TONY!!!

SCENE 6

Lights FADE UP on Herb's garage. Machine is back center stage. FLASH upstage left. Mr. Bigfoot and his thugs stumble in toward center stage. Jack does not have his sunglasses on.

MACK: Wow! What an experience!

JACK: Where are my sunglasses?

MACK: Oh, Jack. You look awful without your sunglasses.

(Jack covers his face.) **JACK:** I feel naked.

MR. BIGFOOT: They must have gotten lost in the molecular transposition. Be glad it's just your glasses that didn't make it back.

(Mack removes his glasses.) **MACK:** Here, I'll give you mine.

JACK: That's real nice of you, Mack. But I couldn't do that to you. You need them worse than I do.

MACK: Really? (He puts them back on and takes out another pair from his coat pocket) Have these. I carry a spare pair. You never know.

(Jack puts them on and sighs with relief.) **JACK:** Aaah...That feels good. Now I can look like a thug again.

(Mr. Bigfoot works on Machine.) **MR. BIGFOOT:** This darn thing doesn't have a precision focus on it. No wonder we got there at the wrong time. (He bangs on it furiously) I've got to make it work. We're going to visit another hero of mine, boys!

JACK: Oh no!

MACK: Can we visit one of mine first?

JACK: Who would that be?

MACK: Goofy.

JACK: Goofy???

MACK: Yeah, Goofy. Mickey's buddy.

JACK: That's Pluto.

MACK: Oh...Well, I want to meet him too.

(Jack raises his hands hopelessly and walks away.)

MR. BIGFOOT (pushing buttons wildly): We're going to pay a visit to the one and only Adolph.

MACK (excited): Adolph the red-nose reindeer?

JACK: That's Rudolph, you dope.

MACK (singing): Adolph the red-nose reindeer had a very shiny nose...

MR. BIGFOOT: Adolph Hitler! Mein Fuhrer!

(He does a stiff nazi salute.)

MACK: I had a hunting dog who did that every time he saw a rabbit.

(Mr. Bigfoot goes back to work on the Machine.) MR. BIGFOOT: I'm going to get the greatest course in being nasty available to humankind.

MACK: Wasn't Hitler a nazi?

JACK: Yes, a nasty nazi.

MR. BIGFOOT: I'm going to take over Iowa, and then the world! I'll have thousands of people saluting me! (He laughs demonically)

JACK: The Bigfoot regime, eh?

(The Machine makes a loud noise and sputters. Mr. Bigfoot is destroying it in his zeal to make it work. The door upstage right opens. Herb, Katy and Thomas enter. They are laughing merrily.)

HERB: So the other guy said...(He sees them) What are you doing in my garage?

MR. BIGFOOT: We've come for this amazing invention.

(The Machine chokes and sputters pitifully.)

HERB: What have you done to her, you brutes?

(Herb hurries to Machine, pushing past Mack and Jack.)

MACK (real macho): Hey, who you pushin', punk?

(Mr. Bigfoot moves aside as Herb looks at Machine.)

MR. BIGFOOT: Fix it for me, boy. I'll give you ten thousand dollars for it.

HERB: You've wrecked it! You've wrecked my baby!

THOMAS: I'm calling the police!

MR. BIGFOOT: Get your guns out, boys!

(Jack and Mack search for their guns in all their pockets.)

JACK/MACK: Where's my gun?

JACK: Oh no! We must have lost them with my sunglasses.

MACK: In the transmutation!

JACK: Transposition.

MACK: Whatever.

(Mr. Bigfoot pushes Herb aside.) MR. BIGFOOT: Keep them away from me while I take us where we need to go!

(In a moment of great courage, Herb tackles him and quickly pushes several buttons. There is a FLASH and the lights FADE OUT abruptly. Lights slowly FADE UP. Mr. Bigfoot and the thugs are gone.)

THOMAS: Where are they?

HERB: Let's just say they won't bother us anymore.

KATY: What did you do to them, Herby?

HERB: Don't worry your pretty head over it.

THOMAS: Herb! What have you done?

(Katy takes Thomas by the arm.) KATY: Make him bring them back, Tom.

HERB: Why? They're dangerous characters. They deserve it.

THOMAS (impatient): Where did you send them, Herb?

HERB (with a twinkle): Back to the Ice Age.

KATY: Isn't that a little severe?

HERB: No, I don't think so. They ruined my invention. I can only get one more trip out of it. And I had special plans...

THOMAS: What do you mean?

HERB: I made this machine for Katy. I...I wanted to heal her blindness...

THOMAS: What?

(Herb crosses to Katy.) HERB: I've always been in love with you, Katy, ever since the sixth grade when you smiled at me on the way home from school. I know you can never be mine. And I can accept that. But I can't accept your blindness. It shouldn't have happened.

KATY: It was an accident.

HERB: If I hadn't been driving that night, we wouldn't have crashed. I knew I had poor night vision. But I wanted to impress you.

(Katy hugs him.) KATY: It's alright, Herb. I forgave you long ago. And I've accepted my blindness. If I can live with it, so can you.

THOMAS: How were you going to have her healed, Herb?

HERB: I was...I was going to send Katy back to the time of Jesus. He would have healed her. So I invented what no one else could and it was all for nothing!

KATY: My sweet Herby. Don't you realize that Jesus has already healed me. He has taught me to accept it and go on living, living happily even. I'm living in the present, not in the past. (She kisses him on the cheek) Now...Bring those poor men back from the Ice Age.

(Herb goes to Machine and pushes buttons. It blinks as lights FADE OUT. There is a FLASH upstage left. Lights FADE UP on the three men who shiver comically as they cross downstage. Jack and Mack have icicles on their sunglasses.)

MR. BIGFOOT (to Herb): I'm going to get you for this!

JACK: Mr. Bigfoot! Look, your foot!

MR. BIGFOOT: This is not the time to make fun of my appendage!

JACK: Look! It's not big anymore!

(Everyone looks at his foot. It is a normal size.)

MR. BIGFOOT (ecstatic): It's the transposition! My foot shrunk in the transposition! (He kisses Herb on the head) How can I thank you? All my life I've been so embarrassed about my big foot that I became mean and bitter. But now I'm a new man! A new man with a new foot! And you know what? I'm quitting my life of crime. I'm going into legitimate business. And I'll give you ten percent of my profits so you can come up with more inventions!

HERB: I don't know what to say...

KATY: Try thank you.

HERB: Thank you.

MR. BIGFOOT: Don't mention it. Come on, boys, let's go buy a shoe franchise!

JACK: Sounds exciting, sir.

MACK: Do I get to wear my sunglasses in the store?

(They exit.)

THOMAS: Looks like you've got yourself a patron, Herb.

HERB: Thanks to you guys.

KATY: What are you going to do with the time machine?

HERB: I've kinda lost interest in it.

THOMAS: Good. You may have created an amazing invention, Herb, but it sure seems to make a lot of trouble. Say, it's getting late. We gotta go. Goodnight, Herb.

KATY: See you tomorrow.

HERB: Bye...

(They exit. Herb approaches his Machine.)

HERB: You bet my baby makes a lot of trouble. Let's see here... March 2010...(He puts on aviator goggles) Trouble, here I come!

The Machine lights up and makes a loud noise. Lights FADE OUT.

THE END