

Scene 1

(Charles and Henry are centre stage. Henry is in trouble.)

Charles: “I’ve got a brilliant idea”, you said.

Henry: Well...

Charles: “Let’s try something new”, you said. “Let’s replace guide dogs for the blind with guide *parrots* for the blind”, you said.

Henry: I blame the parrot.

Charles: The parrot blames you.

Henry: It’s got nothing to do with him!

Charles: He thinks you should walk the plank.

Henry: Does he...?

Charles: He seems to know a lot of nautical terms: pieces of eight; shiver me timbers; yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum. Where did you get him from?

Henry: Just a pet shop on the Caribbean Road.

Charles: Yes. I’ve been back to the pet shop on the Caribbean Road. They don’t seem to have any recollection of Joey.

Henry: Don’t they?

Charles: Tell me, how busy was this pet shop when you were in there?

Henry: Um... it wasn’t *that* busy.

Charles: I see. And who handled the transaction?

Henry: The transaction? Well, Joey said –

Charles: – Joey?

Henry: Yes.

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Charles: Did Joey sell himself?

Henry: They were out the back unpacking a rhinoceros.

Charles: Joey sold himself.

Henry: He's a great salesman. He told me everything I needed to know. And the price was very reasonable.

Charles: Joey was going cheap, was he?

Henry: I can see you're not very happy with the arrangement.

Charles: Not as unhappy as Mr Bartholomew.

Henry: How is he?

Charles: As well as can be expected after a five hour treasure hunt.

Henry: Five hours?

Charles: And no treasure. But that's not the worst of it. There was a rather odd crowd of people following Mr Bartholomew and Joey.

Henry: Was there? Didn't Joey say anything?

Charles: No. He was hoping they would do the digging.

Henry: Well, you can't expect Mr Bartholomew to dig.

Charles: That's beside the point. The crowd turned rather ugly when Mr Bartholomew decided to call it a day. He got quite a fright. He didn't know they were there. Fortunately, a passing policeman intervened.

Henry: That's a relief

Charles: The policeman was not impressed with Joey.

Henry: Why?

Charles: Joey jumped from Mr Bartholomew's shoulder onto the policeman's shoulder and shouted, "A new pair of seven-league boots, me Hearties! Weigh anchor and hoist the mizzen!".

Henry: He jumped ship!?! Disgraceful! What did the policeman do?

Charles: He would have arrested Joey, but he didn't know where to put the handcuffs. So instead he put his hat over Joey's head and carried him off to the nearest police station.

Henry: Where is Joey now?

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Charles: Behind bars.

Henry: He doesn't like being caged.

Charles: He told you that did he?

Henry: How's he going to talk his way out of that?

Charles: Funny you should say that. The last I heard he was squawking his head off about a gang of magpies planning a diamond heist.

Henry: A stool pigeon? No, not Joey. He wouldn't do that.

Charles: It won't do him any good. The police have stopped listening. Joey is to be held in a birdcage, awaiting the arrival of the R.S.P.C.A.

Henry: Poor Joey.

Charles: Poor Mr Bartholomew. I don't know what we are going to say to him.

Henry: We could get him a new parrot.

Charles: I doubt if he will want to continue with the experiment.

Henry: Nothing ventured, nothing gained. What about a homing pigeon?

Charles: Yes, that would be *ideal* if all that Mr Bartholomew wanted to do was go home all the time.

Henry: Oh.

Charles: Not much use if he wants to go anywhere else.

Henry: It *was* a good idea. Maybe Joey will see the error of his ways and turn over a new leaf?

Charles: The only leaf our friend Joey is interested in is the kind one hides behind while waiting for the opportunity to pounce.

Henry: You've got the wrong idea about Joey.

Charles: On the contrary, I've got the right idea about Joey, one that involves a taxidermist. Now go and give Mr Bartholomew back his guide dog, and let's hear no more about it.

(End of scene)