

The Flashback Effect

By Michael Cornetto

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FADE IN:

EXT. WOODED LAKE SHORE - DAY

LOUIS HAMSHIRE(19), a dapper young man stands in the shade of a big old oak. He holds his hat over his crotch and bounces on the balls of his feet as he peeks over his shoulder at

PAULA PRETTIE(18), a beautiful nude young woman who is obscured by the leaves of the bush she stands behind.

LOUIS
I'm sure it's not as bad as it looks, Paula.

PAULA
And there'll be no more looking for you either, Louis Hamshire.

Paula touches herself in an undisclosed location.

PAULA
Ow!

LOUIS
Is there nothing I can do to help?

PAULA
No! I mean yes. Ow! I mean -- talk to me while I dress. Keep my mind off of it. Tell me about your day.

LOUIS
Well -- um -- alright. When I woke this morning, I somehow knew it was going to be quite a special day, even though I had no idea that I would eventually have the pleasure of your company. I had dreamt of you during the evening, so when I hopped out of bed, I had a big smile on my face. But that wasn't the only part of me that was big this morning. (smiles, looks down, adjusts hat) My heart was big too, bursting with my love --

EXT. CENTRE OF FILM MAGIC

In space, a metal film can floats improbably. It has the words "CENTRE OF FILM MAGIC" written across its top.

INT. CONTROL ROOM AT THE CENTRE OF FILM MAGIC

A round room with flashing lights and inscrutable consoles. A large view screen dominates half the wall. The Film Magic elves run about performing their duties.

All the FM elves are ageless and wear brightly coloured skintight polyester outfits. Except for one, they all have pointy ears.

At the centre of the centre, the head elf sits in a 60's retro chair. DIRECTOR J.T. CORK mindlessly plays with his knob, the one on his chair.

His most trusted crew members surround him: on sound is the feline-like ALLURA, on camera is the one and only SOLO and on effects is the quick handed JACK HOFF.

His first assistant director, the niggling round-eared MR. SPECK, stares into a nickelodeon. Intrigued, he flips some switches.

MR. SPECK
Director Cork, we may have a problem.

Cork releases his knob and sits up.

DIRECTOR CORK
What Speck? Another piece of dust on the lens?

MR. SPECK
It's much worse than that, sir.
The protagonist has succumbed to -
- a monologue.

Mumurs of alarm from the crew, the confident Director comes to their rescue.

DIRECTOR CORK
You know the drill, Speck.
Interrupt him. Cut to another character.

MR. SPECK
The other character in the scene is blocking us, sir.

DIRECTOR CORK
Blocking us?

MR. SPECK
I believe she's being modest. She is nude.

DIRECTOR CORK
Nude, you say? Hmmm -- Put it on the view screen, Speck.

The male crew members snap their heads toward the view screen.

On the view screen is a head shot of Louis.

LOUIS
-- mother had prepared a lovely breakfast for me, ham with two poached eggs. And my cup of tea was perfect, like only a mother can make. The whole meal was --

DIRECTOR CORK
How long has this been happening?

MR. SPECK
Close to two minutes sir.

DIRECTOR CORK
Jack Hoff!

JACK HOFF
(caught in the act) Yes, sir!

DIRECTOR CORK
Let's hit him with a natural
disaster -- ready a tornado.

JACK HOFF
I'm sorry sir, there's not enough
in the budget.

DIRECTOR CORK
A rainstorm?

Jack Hoff shakes his head.

DIRECTOR CORK
Allura, open a channel to the
producers.

ALLURA
Yes, Sir.

Allura presses some buttons then cups her ear. She seems
confused.

ALLURA
They all seem to be at lunch,
sir.

Cork raises his fists, he screams toward the ceiling.

DIRECTOR CORK
I NEED MORE BUDGET!

LOUIS
-- and then I spied a robin
flitting about through the trees,
looking for its next meal or
perhaps finding its nest. It
perched lightly on a limb near a
blackbird or it might have been a
starling. I find them both so
easy to misidentify, they --

ALLURA
I'm picking up a strange signal,
sir. A subsonic hum, I think -- I
think it's -- a drone.

DIRECTOR CORK
A drone! Solo, shields up.
Everybody hang on --

The control room rocks back and forth, lights flash and
debris falls.

SOLO
The shields aren't holding, sir!

DIRECTOR CORK
Speck! Any ideas?

MR. SPECK
I believe so, Sir. If the drone's effect cannot be stopped, then it must be slowed.

DIRECTOR CORK
Dammit Speck! In plain Elvish!

MR. SPECK
Slow down the film, sir.

DIRECTOR CORK
Right! Solo, take her down to fps factor 10!

On the view screen, Louis in slow motion.

LOUIS
--shoe--oo--de--ah--ve--beh--en--
muh--or--kay--air--fuh--el--eh--

The control room returns to normal. The crew cheers.

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DIRECTOR CORK (V.O.)
Directors log, SMPTE timecode 11:41:59:29. The protagonist's drone has damaged our control room. Slowing down the film has dampened it's destructive effects, but it continues to erode the film's structure and our morale. Time is running out, we must find a way to transition from this dreary monologue be--

MR. SPECK (V.O.)
Director Cork!

INT. CONTROL ROOM AT THE CENTRE OF FILM MAGIC

The Director snaps out of his reverie.

MR. SPECK
Sir, I must insist that you to step down and let me assume command. It seems the protagonist's monologue is not only contagious, but it has mutated into a cheesy voice over.

Gasps from the crew. The Director swoons.

DIRECTOR CORK
I'm fine Speck. It's not much longer until the end; I'll last. Any progress on a transition?

MR. SPECK
Possibly, sir. But it's highly theoretical. It involves time travel.

DIRECTOR CORK
Time travel! Is it the slingshot effect? Using the gravity of a planet to --

MR. SPECK
No sir, it's a flashback.

DIRECTOR CORK
A flash back? Is it dangerous?

MR. SPECK
Yes sir. If used incorrectly it can destroy the integrity of our vehicle, ruin our careers, maybe even kill us.

DIRECTOR CORK
But can we pull it off?

MR. SPECK
I believe so sir, but only if we move quickly. My calculations show that the prime vector for a flashback should be in 10 sec.

DIRECTOR CORK
Alright Speck. Lock in the coordinates. Solo, full speed.

On the view screen, Louis returns to normal speed.

LOUIS
-- and you were quite lucky that I arrived when I did or --

EXT. WOODED LAKE SHORE - DAY

Louis stands in front of the leafy bush Paula hides behind.

LOUIS
-- that cat would have eaten you alive. Vile creatures! I'll never forget the fateful encounter I had with one when I was a child --

INT. LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK

TODDLER LOUIS pulls the tail of a tabby. With a hiss, it whirls around and scratches his angelic face. Louis cries.

FADE OUT.