

"And Now For My Next Trick..."

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This is the first story I ever wrote for Teen Titans, back when I had only seen Season 1. I utterly loved the supervillain Mumbo Jumbo and his madcap magician antics (from the first time I saw him on the show, he immediately became my favourite baddy), so I decided to write a short story involving him.

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"Ladies and gentlemen..." came a voice from seemingly nowhere, against a backdrop of a red velvet stage curtain, "May I present to you...the greatest magic show ever! Brought to you by none other than..." A magician's baton materialised, floating in mid-air. "...MUMBO JUMBO!"

With that, a figure suddenly appeared on the stage, holding the wand. He was wearing a black tuxedo (embellished by a small yellow flower), top hat and a red vampire-style cloak. His skin was turquoise, his white hair stuck up on either side of his hat, he had a thin white moustache, a pointed nose and – just to complete the look – he was wearing a cat-eye domino mask.

"Welcome, one and all!" continued Mumbo, raising his arms majestically, "In tonight's show, we have a stunning line-up."

The curtains swooshed open dramatically to reveal his first act, situated on the right side of the stage. Robin was suspended upside-down, wearing a black sleeveless Edwardian bathing suit, desperately trying to burst the chains he was wrapped in. Directly below him was a large rectangular tank, filled almost to the brim with water. The audience gasped in shock.

"See the Boy Wonder plunge into the Chinese torture tank! Can he escape in time or will the leader of the Teen Titans meet a watery grave?"

"You won't be seeing the last of me, Mumbo!" shouted Robin, struggling furiously.

"...but that is not all!" went on the villainous magician, pointing his wand at the left side of the stage. In an instant there appeared in the same spot a black table, upon which was Beast Boy, lying on his front, his limbs secured at each corner.

"Marvel at the death saw!" At Mumbo's command, a giant circular saw appeared from the ceiling, rotating at top speed, only a few centimetres above the green super teen's waist. There was a massive gasp from the audience again. "Will this be the end of Beast Boy? Or rather, two ends?!"

He waved his wand again and in the middle of the stage appeared a tall rectangular box with a picture on the front that looked like a human body drawn in a sharp, somewhat triangular style. There were holes for the face, foot and both hands of whomever who locked inside the cabinet and today's victim was none other than Starfire.

"The box you see containing my lovely assistant can split into three compartments." Mumbo suddenly appeared beside the box, gesturing towards it emphatically. He then relaxed his arms and raised the pointer finger on his left hand. "*But* to move the middle one, I will need to make some adjustments to her."

A pair of rectangular blades with black handles appeared out of thin air, ready to slice into the slits above and below the middle section. The audience murmured and Starfire screamed.

"Starfire!" cried Robin, wrestling his bonds even harder.

"But that is not all, ladies and gentlemen!" Mumbo pointed to the far left and just in front of the backdrop (red velvet – like the curtains) appeared Raven, clad in a Chinese tunic. She was tied up, but her hands were bound at the wrist so she was able to hold a china plate in front of her stomach. In front of her were two gunmen wearing green turbans and black and red uniforms, positioning rifles at her head. The audience gasped again. "Behold the amazing Raven, who is to catch two marked bullets in her mouth and spit them onto a plate...but will she succeed?"

Raven ignored him and closed her eyes in concentration. "Azarath Metrion ZINTH-" Mumbo quickly conjured her a gag before she could complete her usual incantation.

"And last but not least..." Mumbo pointed his wand at the very front of the stage and Cyborg appeared

prostrate on the floor, totally immobile. (Mumbo had used his magic to disable his circuits.) “Gasp with terror as Cyborg is run over by a two tonne automobile. I have a message to the children – don’t try this at home!”

A metre away from him appeared the car, driven by an assistant. It was white and blue with similar patterns on it to Cyborg’s robot body parts – in fact; it was the car Cyborg had built himself.

“Oh no, not my baby!” cried Cyborg, “Don’t you dare get a scratch on her!”

“Dude, I think you need to get your priorities straight,” commented Beast Boy.

Mumbo stepped to the very front of the stage. “There you have it, ladies and gentlemen! The greatest magic show of all time! By the time the curtain falls, these meddling teenagers will be no more! Observe – I have modelled these spectacular acts after the works of the world’s most famous magicians.” He materialised beside Robin’s tank and gestured to it with flair. “Harry Houdini’s Chinese water torture tank.” He then appeared at the side of Beast Boy’s table. “David Copperfield’s death saw.” The saw dropped a little lower, making Beast Boy yelp in fright.

Mumbo then transported himself to near Starfire’s cabinet. “Robert Harbin’s zigzag girl.” He was next beside Raven, who looked at him hatefully for barring her from using her powers. “Chung Ling Soo’s bullet catching trick.” Lastly, he whisked himself to Cyborg’s side. “Penn and Teller’s truck illusion.” Then the magician began to rise in the air, his cape billowing out behind him. “By using the techniques of the masters, tonight I – the amazing *MUMBO JUMBO* –” He raised his arms upward and confetti burst from his cloak. “...shall show everyone that I am the world’s *greatest magician!*”

“Hey, Mumbo!” said a woman’s voice from offstage. Mumbo swivelled round, completely taken by surprise, but he couldn’t see anyone in the darkened wings. “You’ve forgotten about one magician’s most famous trick.” The lady stepped out of the shadows, revealing she had pale skin and dark hair. She was wearing a black top hat, suit jacket, a purple waistcoat over a white shirt, a red bow tie and translucent grey tights, with a pair of classy black heels. She was also clutching a magic wand. “Me putting an end to your life of crime.”

Mumbo gasped. “Zatanna! Can it possibly be...?” He sprang in front of her and began shaking her free hand enthusiastically. “I am honoured to meet you, Miss Zatanna Zatara!” he spouted at top speed, “You are one of my greatest inspirations!” He kissed her hand.

Zatanna tore her hand away from him. “I don’t really appreciate your flattery, Mumbo. At least, not when you’ve captured the Teen Titans. I have a few little tricks up my sleeve too...” She pointed at Beast Boy with her baton. “Abracadabra,” she said dryly.

All of a sudden, Beast Boy was freed from his bonds. “Gee, how’d you do that?” The green super boy looked at his wrists in amazement.

“Magic,” replied Zatanna with a wink. Next, she aimed for Raven. “Hey presto.” In an instant, Raven was untied and the gag had been loosened. She zoomed upward, shaking off her Chinese robes, just as the gunmen opened fire, not all that far away from Starfire’s box.

“HELP!” wailed the alien super girl.

Zatanna aimed her wand in the chest’s direction. “Open sesame.” No sooner had she said these words did the cabinet open, allowing Starfire to fly out just before the bullets spat onto the box. Mumbo hadn’t forgotten about the hovering knives, however, and made them slice the air in her direction.

“No thank you, blades!” Starfire raised her arms and blasted them with a surge of green light. “I do not want to be ziggged or zagged today!”

Meanwhile, the ever determined Robin had managed to break the shackles around his torso and was now trying to untie his feet. “Uh, uh, uh, Boy Wonder!” tutted Mumbo Jumbo, “You’re still taking the plunge!” He zapped the rope and Robin plummeted into the icy cold water.

“Robin!” cried Starfire and aimed another stream of green power at the water chamber. The tank exploded open and quick as a flash, Robin had sprung to his feet, ready for battle.

Whilst this was going on, Raven was floating above the stage, summoning her powers. “Azarath Metrion *ZINTHOS!*” Black circles appeared over her hands. She aimed her magic towards Cyborg’s car, which the assistant had now decided to start driving over Cyborg while he still had the chance. As soon as Raven’s enchantment had hit it, the car rose through the air and she deposited it just in front of the stage, lying on its side to prevent any more mischief.

“Boo yah!” exclaimed Cyborg, leaping to his feet and inspecting Raven’s handiwork, “Great job, Rae! There’s not a scratch on it.”

Behind them, Starfire attacked the gunmen with an emerald blast. One of them was catapulted onto the back curtain, the rifle flying out of his hand. Robin aimed a karate kick at the other marksman and knocked him senseless.

Meanwhile, Zatanna pointed her wand at the death saw – “Hocus pocus!” – and the whirring blade was brought to a standstill, allowing Beast Boy to jump off the bench safely, in the form of a rabbit. He leapt into Zatanna’s arms and she gave him an affectionate pat. Mumbo Jumbo gazed at her admiringly, massive love hearts appearing in his eyes.

“You used my signature words!” he cried.

“I know all about you,” responded Zatanna, turning to face him, “And how you use your magician persona to commit crime. I figured something was up when I found my friend Caspian the Conjuror tied up behind the stage – neither you nor his audience realised I was going to be making a guest appearance in his show. It’s just a typical supervillain trick, taking over an established magician’s show and placing henchmen around the theatre to stop the audience from escaping. There is no escape for *you* now, Mumbo Jumbo.”

The five Teen Titans surrounded him, each one of them looking angry and ready to fight. Starfire’s eyes were glowing green and both her and Raven were floating; their powers seething in their hands.

“We owe you one, Zatanna,” said Robin, still wearing the Edwardian swimsuit.

“I’m just paying back an old friend,” responded Zatanna with a smile, looking at Robin.

“You cannot stop me!” shouted Mumbo, although he sounded a little less confident, “I am the world’s *greatest magician!*”

He raised his right arm, about to cast another one of his wacky spells with his wand, glittering light surrounding the tip, when all of a sudden the baton was snatched right out of his hand.

“I’m taking this for safe keeping,” said Zatanna, the wand sailing into her free hand.

Mumbo looked down at his own hands in horror as he saw them turn back into the un-gloved Caucasian ones he had when his stick was taken away from him. The fabulous Mumbo Jumbo had soon turned back into his regular self – a balding, grey-haired man wearing a simple white shirt and black trousers.

“No, no, no!” lamented Mumbo, kneeling on the floor and clutching his head in dismay, “My show! It’s ruined!”

“Show’s over, Mumbo!” said Robin forcefully.

“I cannot believe this...all I wanted was to perform the greatest magic show in the world!”

“Yeah, and kill us off as part of the act!” said Cyborg.

One of the gunmen stirred in the background. Starfire shot him another blow just in case he sprang back into action.

“That’s because you keep *getting in the way* of my plans,” responded Mumbo.

“We’re taking you right back to prison,” said Robin, taking hold of one of his wrists in a tight grasp.

Cyborg gripped the other one.

“Oh well...at least I got to meet the lovely Zatanna. I suppose meeting you will be the last good memory I have before I’m locked up again, especially if I never did get to have the greatest magic show of all time.” He looked down sadly.

Suddenly, not only catching him by surprise but Zatanna and the Titans as well, there was the sound of

applause. Mumbo looked upward to see that everyone in the audience was clapping and cheering!

“Bravo!”

“Encore, encore!”

“Hooray for the Teen Titans!”

Lots of the spectators even stood up or cast flowers onto the stage! Mumbo had never seen the likes of it in his entire life. He remembered it had always been one of his oldest and deepest dreams to see an audience react so wildly to one of his performances. For once, he felt genuinely touched – the audience had liked his show! Not only that, they’d loved it! Well, maybe that was because the Teen Titans had defeated him in it, but never mind...

“Guys...I think we should bow,” prompted Beast Boy, and bow they did, with the exception of Starfire, who used her miniskirt to give a little curtsy.

The audience continued cheering as the curtain dropped and the entertainers continued bowing.

After the curtain fell, Mumbo asked, “Am I still going to prison for this?”

“What do you think, Mumbo?” responded Robin sarcastically.

The End