

**Fabulous Faye and his Fantastic Finale**  
by MK Cornfield

Arlo Faye walked to the middle of the stage, hidden behind several maroon velvet curtains. The curtains separated, the lights turned on, and Arlo saw his shadow. Emphasized by the bright lights, his back was hunched, his knees bent together.

*Well, he thought, I'm not seventeen any more.*

Arlo straightened when he looked again at his shadow. The tall, black top hat that rested on his head gained him several inches in height. He had worn the same hat for the last fifty years—at every show, at every performance. It had faded in color, and the small tear in the fabric Arlo had patched with a single square of red.

“Hello, everyone!” Arlo shouted toward the theater, taking his bow. “Welcome to my very last magic show.”

The crowd applauded. Arlo stood, his hands raised above his head, his right hand holding a small, black wand. It was slightly bent in the middle from years of use.

Arlo performed his act. He performed with grace and dignity. He made a butterfly flutter out of a small, black box that had been empty before. He caught a bullet in midair. He hypnotized a dog to believe it was an alligator.

In the end, Arlo took his final bow. He heard the roar of the audience, and when the lights slowly rose up, he looked at last into the crowd and saw that every seat was empty.