

MR. WIZARD -- LEVERAGE CHALLENGE
(By Chris Rogers)

TITLE GRAPHIC

High energy synthesizer music plays as a SPACE SHUTTLE crosses the screen. Its CARGO BAY DOORS open and the word "CHALLENGE" flies out.

INT. MR. WIZARD'S WORKSHOP/HOUSE - DAY

MR. WIZARD and NATALIE stand at a TABLE, mid-conversation.

MR. WIZARD
...I did fly planes in the
airforce. But for today,
Natalie...

Mr. Wizard motions to a BOTTLE OF BEER on the table.

MR. WIZARD (CONT'D)
...do you know what this is?

NATALIE
It looks like a bottle of beer?

MR. WIZARD
That's right. I assume you've
never had one?

NATALIE
A beer? No. But my dad drinks a
lotta them. Usually at night, but
sometimes in the afternoon or
morning. It makes my Mom mad.

MR. WIZARD
Well, they came in handy -- bottles
of beer...
(gaze grows distant)
During the war... To forget...
(snaps back to reality)
But what I want you to do, Natalie,
is OPEN this bottle of beer. Do
that and you can have a sip.

NATALIE
That's super easy! I just need a
bottle opener!

MR. WIZARD

Well, I don't have a bottle opener.
And that's your challenge!

NATALIE

What!?!

MR. WIZARD

Can you open this bottle of
delicious beer WITHOUT a bottle
opener?

NATALIE

Gosh, I don't know! Guess I can
give it a try.

Natalie bites the cap, attempts to rip it off with her teeth.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Ouch!

Natalie spits a piece of TOOTH into her hand.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Chipped my tooth.

MR. WIZARD

Hmmm... Bicuspid...
(distant gaze returns)
Captain Hawkes wore a necklace of
bear teeth. A good man... Shot
down over Dresden...

NATALIE

Gosh. I'm sorry.

MR. WIZARD

(back in the moment)
Not to worry, Natalie. We all have
crosses to bear...

NATALIE

Yeah. For me it's weekend
homework. That junk's the pits.

MR. WIZARD

Right... How about a hint?

Mr. Wizard unpockets a CIGARETTE LIGHTER. Places it on the
table.

NATALIE

A lighter... Okay...

Natalie examines the lighter, strikes a flame...

NATALIE (CONT'D)
 Maybe I can burn it off?

MR. WIZARD
 Now, the lighter's flame is hot,
 but not hot enough to melt the cap.
 No, that'd take some REAL heat,
 like the godless heat of battle. A
 horrible heat I pray you never
 experience.

NATALIE
 I can, um, come back? If you need
 some time...

MR. WIZARD
 It's fine. I'm fine. Here, let me
 show you something...

Mr. Wizard pulls some items from under the table, constructs
 a simple see-saw-type LEVER on the desk.

MR. WIZARD (CONT'D)
 Do you know what this is?

NATALIE
 Yeah! We made one in science
 class. It's a lever!

MR. WIZARD
 That's right, and what does it do?

NATALIE
 Well, it helps you lift things you
 normally couldn't.

MR. WIZARD
 Yes. That's leverage. And
 leverage does help you do things
 you normally couldn't... "*Things*
you normally couldn't," hmmm...
 That's funny...

Close on Mr. Wizard and his million mile stare...

MR. WIZARD (CONT'D)
 There were many things I couldn't
 do. But did I do everything I
could do? Why did I make it back
 when so many others didn't --
 other's who, in many respects, were
 more worthy? BETTER than me.

(MORE)

MR. WIZARD (CONT'D)
 Am I special? NO. Just dumb luck.
 There's no reason. If there is,
 it's beyond my comprehension. I
 try to make a positive mark. And,
 for the most part, I've succeeded.
 But that damn question "WHY?" still
 lingers-

NATALIE
 I, um, think I figured it out...

MR. WIZARD
 (snaps back to the moment)
 Great. Would you like to try out
 your hypothesis?

NATALIE
 Sure...

Mr. Wizard pulls out some safety goggles, hands them to
 Natalie.

MR. WIZARD
 But first, put on these safety
 glasses.

Natalie puts on the glasses, then uses the lighter to pop off
 the beer's top.

Foam bubbles out as the cap flies from the bottle.

NATALIE
 I did it!

MR. WIZARD
 Better suck that down. Don't wanna
 make a mess.

Natalie drinks the beer bubbling from the bottle.

MR. WIZARD (CONT'D)
 And this experiment is one you
 ought not try at home unless your
 parents *AREN'T* around -- on account
 of the underage alcohol
 consumption.

Mr. Wizard pulls out another bottle, pops the cap with the
 lighter.

MR. WIZARD (CONT'D)
 Think I'll join you. Gonna take
 more than a sip to get me where I
 need to go.

NATALIE
Tastes good!

MR. WIZARD
I know, right? And you can thank
leverage for allowing us to enjoy
these ice cold beers.

Mr. Wizard takes a long pull.

MR. WIZARD (CONT'D)
A couple more of these and I'll
forget the horror... A few numb
hours of peace.

CUT TO:

MR. WIZARD'S WORLD LOGO

THE END