



By Pat Lydersen

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THE COMIC BOOK ARTIST

By PAT LYDERSEN

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In Order of Speaking)

		<u># of lines</u>
NARRATOR.....	comic-book type character with a dramatic flair	26
STANLEY LEONARDO SAPPOVITZ	slightly nerdy young man	109
MR. WUNDERMAN.....	typical Mel Brooks-type businessman	48
ARTISTS	Wunderman's staff (at least three, up to six)	54
VIOLA.....	Wunderman's competent but slightly air-headed young secretary; falls in love with Stanley	40
DOCTOR SHOCK CLOCK.....	villain; can stop time with the snap of his fingers	31
MINUTOS	Dr. Shock Clock's henchmen (at least three)	24
STAR GUY	full-of-himself superhero; charisma ray is his main superpower	49
TRIPLE TIME	super-fast superhero; has constant tension with Star Guy	26
BLOSSOM.....	environmentalist superhero; magical flowers put enemies to sleep	17
WOMBAT WOMAN	slightly grouchy but good-hearted superhero; super-burrower	40

BIT PARTS

KIDS (as many as 16)	2
GIRLS (at least three).....	14
BANK TELLER	2
BANK CUSTOMER	2
GOLD WAREHOUSE MANAGER.....	2
GOLD WAREHOUSE EMPLOYEES (at least two)	6
SALESLERK.....	2
JEWELRY CUSTOMER.....	1
GLADYS.....	1
WOMAN WITH PURSE.....	1
ROCK GROUP (at least 3).....	n/a
EMCEE.....	3
ROTTEN PENNY	2
CROWD MEMBERS (at least 2)	9
POLICEMEN (at least two).....	10
NEWSBOY	2
EXTRAS (DREAM SUPERHEROES [up to 6], CROWD MEMBERS).....	n/a

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE

Scene One: Present-day New York City.

Scene Two: D. C. Wunderman's executive office at Wonder Comics. A work day.

Scene Three: Same. The next day.

Scene Four: Same. A few minutes later.

Scene Five: A bank, the gold warehouse, a jewelry store, a street. A few days later.

ACT TWO

Scene One: Wunderman's office. Same time as in Act One, Scene Five.

Scene Two: Times Square. Later that night.

Scene Three: Wunderman's office. The next day.

Scene Four: Roof of the Times Building. Midnight the next evening.

Scene Five: Wunderman's office. The next day.

SET DESCRIPTION

The play takes place at various locales in New York City. All sets for the play can be represented with a set of tall and short rehearsal blocks and a few other props. D. C. Wunderman's office is the main set and can be represented by an executive-type desk LEFT and a smaller secretarial desk RIGHT, each with a chair. A wastebasket sits beside the larger desk. Two rehearsal blocks can be stacked to form a bench, CENTER. An EXIT RIGHT leads to the rest of the offices and outside. Various EXITS are used for other scenes.

In Scene Three, a large panel drawing of Dr. Shock Clock is onstage and remains part of the office set until Scene Ten. For Scene Five, area staging is used. The bank, gold warehouse, jewelry store and street settings take place STAGE RIGHT, CENTER, LEFT and on the FORESTAGE respectively, using blocks as counters for the bank and store. For Scene Seven, Times Square can be represented by a small stage or platform UPSTAGE to simulate a concert venue. For Scene Nine, tall and short blocks should be arranged to simulate the roof of the Times Building. A painted backdrop of New York City adds a nice touch, if possible.

THE COMIC BOOK ARTIST

ACT ONE

Scene One

1 LIGHTS UP: A variety of KIDS sit in groups and alone, on rehearsal blocks (which can be scattered across the stage) and on the floor, all reading comic books. STANLEY, wearing a baseball cap, sits CENTER STAGE with his back to the AUDIENCE, sketching. The NARRATOR
5 ENTERS RIGHT and looks around at EVERYONE.

NARRATOR: Comic books—pitting the noble forces of good against the dastardly schemes of the wicked.

KID #1: Venom is way stronger and more powerful than Spiderman, but he can't take fire and loud noises. That will do him in every
10 time!

KID #2: Even a tiny little paperclip is a deadly weapon in the hands of Bullseye!

KID #3: It says here that X-Statix 21 has the rumble of the century! Wow!

15 **NARRATOR:** (*Crosses to a GROUP OF KIDS.*) Comic books. Every new issue is devoured by millions of adoring fans.

KID #4: Have you got the latest Daredevil issue?

KID #5: My dad has every one of the early Superman volumes in mint condition.

20 **KID #6:** Fantastic Four! I need the new Fantastic Four!

NARRATOR: (*Crosses to ANOTHER GROUP.*) Comic books. They spawn world-wide conventions and blockbuster movies. Heroes and villains alike are made into toys and printed on t-shirts, lunch boxes, sheets and pillowcases. (*Holds up some superhero item.*)

25 **KID #7:** Did you know that you can buy a copy of the ruby quartz visor that Cyclops wears?!

KID #8: There's a comic book convention next week. You can get really rare collector's editions there.

KID #9: I heard there's a new movie coming out with Dr. Octopus and
30 Magneto—together!

NARRATOR: Comic books—a modern mythology. (*EXITS.*)

KID #10: Dr. Doom has an IQ of, I don't know, like 200 gazillion!

KID #11: The way Sabertooth can heal himself is truly amazing!

KID #12: Rogue and Gambit really love each other. It's too bad
35 Rogue can't touch him without knocking him out and assuming his identity!

1 **KID #13:** The Human Torch is so cool! I wonder why his clothes never burn up.

KID #14: The problem with Mr. Fantastic is that he feels so guilty about causing his friends to be mutagenically altered.

5 **KID #15:** I don't think it's fair that Ben Grimm is the only one of the Fantastic Four who can't change back to his original self. He must get really tired of being that big orange thing!

KID #16: When the Beast was still the kid, Hank McCoy, he had very large hands and feet. My feet have always been really big. (*Looks at his hands.*) My hands are kind of big, too.

10 **NARRATOR:** (*RE-ENTERS.*) They love their superheroes, these comic book fans. They love how they battle nightmarish villains, overmatched and overwhelmed, but always emerging victorious to fight another day. They love that they are mostly common men and women, sharing their own human flaws, their hopes, their dreams. (*Moves CENTER in front of STANLEY, hiding him.*) After all, it is only some random quirk of fate that has made these heroes what they are. Peter Parker, the shy young high school student bitten by an irradiated spider, became the famous Spiderman. The struggling young artist, Kyle Rayner, became the Green Lantern. (*In the following sequence, each ACTOR stands to deliver the line. The lines should come quickly and energetically, building to a crescendo.*)

KID #1: Bruce Banner...

25 **KID #2:** ...became the Incredible Hulk.

KID #3: Matthew Murdock...

KID #4: ...became Daredevil.

KID #5: Reed Richards...

KID #6: ...became Mr. Fantastic.

30 **KID #7:** Scott Summers...

KID #8: —Cyclops.

KID #9: Clark Kent...

KID #10: —Superman.

KID #11: Steven Rogers...

35 **KID #12:** —Captain America.

KID #13: Bruce Wayne...

KID #14: —Batman.

KID #15: Wally West...

KID #16: —The Flash.

40 **NARRATOR:** Stanley Sappovitz—

1 **ALL:** Stanley Sappovitz?

NARRATOR: Stanley Sappovitz. (*Moves aside and puts his hand out to present STANLEY, who has swung around to face front.*)

5 **STANLEY:** (*To NARRATOR as he EXITS RIGHT.*) It's Stanley Leonardo Sappovitz, actually. (*To AUDIENCE.*) My mother named me Leonardo after that artist. I think he lived in Italy a long time ago or something. She says he was a really good artist. I'm glad she named me that because I'm an artist, too. At least, I want to be. I've been drawing ever since I can remember. I really got
10 dedicated, though, when I saw my first comic book. I was about eight. As soon as I opened up the pages, I knew what I wanted to be when I grew up. I wanted to get a job in a comic book company and be a comic book artist. I wanted to spend my life drawing pictures of superheroes! (*LIGHTS OUT.*)

End of Scene One

ACT ONE

Scene Two

15 **LIGHTS UP:** On Wunderman's office. STANLEY, no longer wearing a baseball cap, is standing FROZEN behind the desk at LEFT, looking at some papers. A broom is leaning against the desk. The NARRATOR ENTERS RIGHT and looks at the frozen STANLEY.

20 **NARRATOR:** (*To AUDIENCE.*) Stanley grew up, as all boys do, and he did get a job in a comic book company. Wonder Comics, run by the illustrious D. C. Wunderman! (*EXITS RIGHT.*)

25 **STANLEY:** (*UNFREEZES.*) This is going to be the best issue of Lionface yet! The drawings are stupendous! (*Looks around, then walks CENTER STAGE.*) I can't believe I'm actually here, working for D. C. Wunderman, the greatest comic book man of all time! I can almost see all the superheroes and villains that have been created here. (*OPTIONAL DREAMY MUSIC BEGINS, and various DREAM SUPERHEROES ENTER as he calls their names. [NOTE: If EXTRAS aren't available, STANLEY can simply call out the names and imagine the characters ONSTAGE.]*) Meteor Man! Swamp Creature! Cat Lady! Master Freeze! The Jester! King Comet! (*Joins these CHARACTERS in a dream dance.*)

30 **WUNDERMAN:** (*ENTERS RIGHT.*) Sippovatz! (*MUSIC immediately STOPS, and the DREAM SUPERHEROES drift OFF.*) What are you doing? I told you to sweep all the floors and empty the trash
35 cans.

STANLEY: (*Jerked out of his reverie.*) Yes, Mr. Wunderman. Right away, Mr. Wunderman. (*Gets broom and begins to sweep.*) By the

1 way, Mr. Wunderman, it's Sappovitz. Stanley Leonardo Sappovitz. My mother named me Leonardo after—

WUNDERMAN: Yeah, yeah, yeah. (*Hollers OFF RIGHT.*) Viola!

5 **VIOLA:** (*ENTERS RIGHT, dressed in a miniskirt with a wide belt.*) I've given everyone their assignments for the week, Mr. Wunderman. (*Hands him a folder.*) And your wife called and said don't forget to pick up her dress at the cleaners on your way home from work.

WUNDERMAN: (*Leafs through the papers in the folder as he crosses LEFT to his desk.*) What does she think I am, a deliveryman?

10 **STANLEY:** (*Timidly approaches WUNDERMAN.*) Mr. Wunderman, I was wondering if you have given any thought to my request about being allowed to try some drawing. (*Takes a paper out of his pocket.*) I have something I've done right here to—

WUNDERMAN: Not now, Sippovatz, I've got work to do!

15 **STANLEY:** Oh, of course, sir. Sorry, sir. (*Puts the drawing back into his pocket and gets back to sweeping, only to stop for a moment to speak again very timidly.*) And, pardon me, sir, but it's Sappovitz, Stanley Leonardo Sappovitz.

WUNDERMAN: (*Pays no attention.*) Right, Sippovatz, right.

20 **VIOLA:** Mr. Wunderman. I almost forgot. There's a big box in the mailroom addressed to you. I would have brought it up, but I already broke a nail this morning, and I just—

WUNDERMAN: A big box, you say? That's probably the shipment I've been waiting for! Sippovatz!

25 **STANLEY:** (*Excited.*) Yes, Mr. Wunderman! (*Starts to take out his drawing.*) Did you want to see my drawing? I was—

WUNDERMAN: Go down to the mailroom and bring up the box addressed to me.

30 **STANLEY:** (*Disappointed, puts the drawing away.*) Oh, the mailroom. Sure, right away, Mr. Wunderman. (*EXITS RIGHT.*)

VIOLA: (*Watches him go.*) Stanley is such a hard worker, Mr. Wunderman. Maybe you should look at his drawings some time. I bet he's a very good artist.

35 **WUNDERMAN:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Everyone's an artist. Get me those budget figures you were working on yesterday, Viola.

VIOLA: Yes, sir. (*Goes over to her desk at RIGHT and returns with some papers.*) Here they are, Mr. Wunderman. They're not too good this month. Comic book sales are down a little.

40 **WUNDERMAN:** (*Looks at the papers.*) A little? You call this a little? Bah! (*Tosses papers down.*) With all my overhead, salaries, taxes and all, I'll be in the poorhouse by summer.

1 **STANLEY:** (*ENTERS RIGHT with box.*) Here's your package, Mr. Wunderman.

WUNDERMAN: (*Looks at the box.*) Ah, yes, this is it—just in time, too. Put it on my desk, Sippovatz. (*STANLEY crosses LEFT to*

5 *WUNDERMAN'S desk with box.*) Viola, get all my artists in here. I have something important to discuss with them.

VIOLA: Of course, sir. (*EXITS RIGHT.*)

WUNDERMAN: Sippovatz!

STANLEY: Actually, it's Sappovitz, Mr. Wunderman, Stanley Leonardo

10 Sappovitz. My mother—

WUNDERMAN: I'm sure your mother's a queen of a lady, Sippovatz, but I don't have time for her right now. I need you to get out of here. Go clean something downstairs for a few hours. Maybe dust all our old issues in the back storeroom.

15 **STANLEY:** Dust them, sir?

WUNDERMAN: Yeah, dust them. Don't come back here until maybe eight o'clock tonight. We'll be finished by then, and you can clean up here.

STANLEY: All right, Mr. Wunderman. Whatever you say, Mr.

20 Wunderman. (*Starts to EXIT, then STOPS and takes out his drawing.*) Maybe, do you think, if you had some time, you could look at my drawing?

WUNDERMAN: Sure, sure. (*Takes the drawing.*) Now, get out of here!

STANLEY: (*Excited.*) Okay, Mr. Wunderman! Thank you, Mr.

25 Wunderman! (*EXITS RIGHT.*)

WUNDERMAN: (*Walks over to his desk, absently crushes the drawing into a ball and throws it into the trash can. He then lovingly picks up the box.*) Yes sirree, this little box could be the salvation of my company!

30 **VIOLA:** (*ENTERS RIGHT, followed by the ARTISTS, some of whom sit on the bench at CENTER.*) Everyone's here, Mr. Wunderman.

ARTIST #1: Hi, D. C.!

ARTIST #2: What's up?

ARTIST #3: What's so important?

35 **WUNDERMAN:** Viola, it's almost five o'clock. (*Hands her her purse and starts pushing her towards EXIT RIGHT.*) Why don't you leave a little early today? We don't need you at this meeting.

VIOLA: But, Mr. Wunderman, I still haven't filed the—

WUNDERMAN: File shmile! You work too hard. Go home and relax.

40 In fact, take the day off tomorrow.

- 1 **VIOLA:** The day off? But, I—
WUNDERMAN: No arguments! You deserve a little vacation. Now, out!
- 5 **VIOLA:** Yes, sir. Good night, Mr. Wunderman. Thank you, Mr. Wunderman. (*EXITS RIGHT.*)
WUNDERMAN: (*Turns to ARTISTS.*) Now, everyone, I have something very important to discuss with you.
ARTIST #4: Okay, we're listening.
WUNDERMAN: It's top secret—for your ears only.
- 10 **ARTIST #5:** Spit it out, Wundy.
ARTIST #6: Whatever it is, I hope it makes us more money!
WUNDERMAN: Oh, it will make us more money, my friends. Much more money! More than we ever dreamed of! At least, it will make me that much. You artists—it will give you a big fat raise.
- 15 **ARTIST #1:** I'm always up for a big fat raise.
ARTIST #2: Me, too. The fatter the better.
ARTIST #3: Does this involve coming up with a new series?
WUNDERMAN: New series—ha! What we're going to do will be far better than just coming up with a new series. It will be revolutionary! It will change the very face of comic book art!
- 20 **ARTIST #4:** It will?
ARTIST #5: What could be so revolutionary about comic book art?
ARTIST #6: Yeah, no matter what we try, I'm sure it's been done before.
- 25 **WUNDERMAN:** That's where you're wrong. This has never been done before, and it will make us a fortune. What would you say if I told you that I have found a way to make whatever we draw come alive! That the characters in our books could become real, walking, talking villains and superheroes!
- 30 **ARTIST #1:** What?
ARTIST #2: That's impossible!
WUNDERMAN: Oh, no, it's not impossible at all. It can be done very simply by using the pens that are in this box right here. Whatever we draw with them will come to life. It's guaranteed! I read all about it in this catalog. Listen to this! (*Picks up the catalog from his desk and begins to read.*) "Tired of sitting at your pad all day drawing flat, lifeless pictures? Try our Powerful Pens from Peloponnesia for a truly unique experience! Filled with ink created from potions discovered in the wizard caves of ages gone by, these pens will bring life to any hero or villain you draw."
- 40

1 **ARTIST #3:** That sounds a little far-fetched to me.
ARTIST #4: A “little” far-fetched is putting it mildly.
ARTIST #5: You don’t really believe this, do you, D. C.?
ARTIST #6: It sounds like scam city to me.

5 **WUNDERMAN:** If it were a scam, why would they write this— (*Reads from the catalog again.*) “Full satisfaction guaranteed or your money back!” I tell you, everyone, these little pens are going to make us a fortune!

ARTIST #1: Let me get this straight—whatever we draw with these
10 pens will actually come alive?

WUNDERMAN: Absolutely!

ARTIST #2: That is truly weird.
ARTIST #3: Weird, but you know, it does have some very interesting possibilities.

15 **ARTIST #4:** But if they come to life, how would we make the characters do what we want them to do?

WUNDERMAN: Simple! We just keep drawing them following our story line.

ARTIST #5: If that worked, then people would be able to watch our
20 superheroes and villains actually living through all the adventures we think up for them!

ARTIST #6: You’re right. It would be far better than an ordinary comic book!

ARTIST #1: Better than TV!

25 **ARTIST #2:** Better than the movies!
ARTIST #3: It would be the ultimate reality show!

WUNDERMAN: Now you’re talking! We’re going to strike it rich with this, very rich!

ARTIST #4: Rich is nice.

30 **ARTIST #5:** I can live with rich.
ARTIST #6: And very rich is even better!

WUNDERMAN: Okay, it’s too late to start tonight, so I want everybody to go home, get a good night’s sleep and be ready to start bright and early tomorrow morning on our first issue of “Wonder Comics Alive”!

35 **ARTISTS:** “Wonder Comics Alive”! (*Start to leave, EXITING RIGHT as they ad-lib: “I’ve got an idea already!” “I think my newest superhero will work!” “This is totally unbelievable!” and so on.*)

WUNDERMAN: (*Looks at the box of pens.*) Powerful Pens from Peloponnesia—you have made my day! (*EXITS RIGHT.*)

40

1 **STANLEY:** *(After a pause, ENTERS RIGHT with his broom.)* I finished dusting all the back issues, Mr. Wunderman. Mr. Wunderman? *(Looks around.)* I guess he left for the night. Maybe I'll just empty his trash can and leave myself. I want to work on that new
5 superhero I thought of. *(Crosses LEFT to desk, picks up the trash can and finds his drawing there.)* My drawing... I... I guess he didn't like it. *(VIOLA ENTERS RIGHT and crosses to her desk at RIGHT. Picks up some papers.)* Hello, Viola.

VIOLA: Stanley! I didn't see you there. I just came back to get some
10 papers. *(Sees him holding his drawing.)* What's that you're holding?

STANLEY: Oh, this is just the drawing I gave to Mr. Wunderman. He didn't like it. I found it in his trash can.

VIOLA: *(Crosses to him.)* Stanley, I'm sorry.

15 **STANLEY:** It's all right. I'll just have to draw a better one.

VIOLA: *(Sees the open box of pens on WUNDERMAN'S desk, and takes one out.)* Hey, Stanley. Mr. Wunderman must have ordered this box of pens to give out to his artists. *(Hands pen to STANLEY.)* Why don't you take this one? He won't miss one little pen, and
20 maybe it will bring you luck.

STANLEY: A pen from Wonder Comics! Gee, Viola, thanks.

VIOLA: Don't mention it. I better get going. Mr. Wunderman gave me the day off tomorrow. Isn't that nice of him?

STANLEY: It sure is—very nice. Good night, Viola.

25 **VIOLA:** Good night. *(EXITS RIGHT.)*

STANLEY: *(Looks at the pen.)* I'm going to be a comic book artist if it's the last thing I do. *(LIGHTS OUT.)*

End of Scene Two

ACT ONE

Scene Three

SPOTLIGHT UP: On the NARRATOR, FAR DOWN RIGHT.

NARRATOR: Will Stanley get to be a comic book artist? Will the Pens of Peloponnesia really work? Will D. C. Wunderman make piles of
30 money? The next day answered one of these questions. *(EXITS RIGHT. LIGHTS UP FULL on WUNDERMAN'S office. There is a panel UP CENTER covered with a black drape. The ARTISTS are ONSTAGE with sketch pads, some sitting on bench CENTER.)*

35 **ARTIST #4:** We've been sketching all morning. My hand is killing me.

ARTIST #5: Where's Wunderman? The meeting was supposed to start ten minutes ago.

1 **ARTIST #6:** I don't know, but I wish he'd decide which of our characters we're going to use for "Wonder Comics Alive."

ARTIST #1: Me, too. I want to try out one of those pens from Peloponnesia.

5 **ARTIST #2:** Do you think they could really work?

ARTIST #3: We'll know soon enough. Here comes Wunderman.

WUNDERMAN: (*ENTERS RIGHT.*) Okay, everyone, listen up. You've worked hard all morning presenting me with sketches of superhero after superhero. I've studied them all carefully and have now chosen the character who will become the first in our groundbreaking series, "Wonder Comics Alive." This is the character you will draw with your new Pens from Peloponnesia. You will draw his environment, his headquarters, his tools, his henchmen. You will draw him in all his glory so he can leap from our pages to become a living, breathing superhero!

10 **ARTIST #4:** Unveil the picture already, Wunderman.

ARTIST #5: Yeah, we want to get started!

WUNDERMAN: For Pete's sake, people, this is a momentous moment. It deserves a little fanfare. Where was I... oh, yes, do you have your sketchbooks ready?

15 **ARTISTS:** Sketchbooks ready!

WUNDERMAN: Do you have your pens in hand?

ARTISTS: Pens in hand!

WUNDERMAN: Prepare yourselves to go down in comic book history!

20 **ARTISTS:** We are prepared!

WUNDERMAN: It is now my honor to present to you the cornerstone of our new "Wonder Comics Alive" series—Dr. Shock Clock! (*There is a FANFARE as he pulls the black drape off the panel to reveal an enormous painting of Dr. Shock Clock. He is an imposing character with an hourglass headpiece, a clock face on his chest and a variety of clocks and watches throughout his costume. [NOTE: Of course, if your SHOCK CLOCK is costumed differently, the painting should be altered accordingly.] The ARTISTS "ooh" and "aah."*)

25 **ARTIST #6:** That's mine! I drew that one!

WUNDERMAN: Yes, you did, and congratulations. This is our new superhero, folks! Our living comic prototype! Now it's time for you to use all your artistic skills to bring him to life. Raise your Powerful Pens from Peloponnesia and—ready, set, draw! (*OPTIONAL MUSIC PLAYS. The ARTISTS start drawing, and as they do, SHOCK CLOCK'S assistants, the MINUTOS, ENTER from LEFT and*

- 1 *RIGHT in dance-like moves, bringing on an assortment of clocks, hourglasses, sundials and the like. Finally, the MUSIC reaches a CRESCENDO, and THREE MINUTOS go to the panel drawing.)*
- MINUTO #1:** It is now time...
- 5 **MINUTO #2:** ...to present our leader!
- MINUTO #3:** Please welcome...
- ALL MINUTOS:** ...Dr. Shock Clock! *(With a FANFARE, SHOCK CLOCK jumps from behind the panel. ALL ARTISTS applaud.)*
- SHOCK CLOCK:** Thank you, thank you. Glad to be here. And so are my little helpers, the Minutos. Aren't you, Minutos?
- 10 **MINUTOS:** *(In clockwork unison.)* Yes, Master of the Minute! We are glad to be here.
- WUNDERMAN:** And we're glad to have you, Dr. Shock Clock. You are going to make history as the first living, breathing superhero of all time.
- 15 **SHOCK CLOCK:** Superhero? What's this superhero stuff? I'm no hero. I'm a villain. The grandest villain around! *(ALL are stunned.)*
- WUNDERMAN:** But you can't be! We drew you to be a superhero. That's our trademark. That's—
- 20 **SHOCK CLOCK:** *(Snaps his fingers, and WUNDERMAN FREEZES in mid-sentence. To ARTISTS.)* Notice how your boss has just been frozen in time? I did that. It is my power because I, Dr. Shock Clock, can stop time with a mere snap of my fingers! *(Snaps his fingers again, and WUNDERMAN UNFREEZES.)*
- 25 **WUNDERMAN:** What happened?
- SHOCK CLOCK:** I happened, little man. I stopped you in your tracks, froze you in the moment. I am the master of time. I can bend it—and all that depend on it—to my will. Not a second, not a minute, not an hour can pass without my consent.
- 30 **WUNDERMAN:** No! It can't be!
- SHOCK CLOCK:** Oh, yes it can! And you, your company, this city, the entire world, in fact, are mine for the taking. It's only, you might say, a matter of time. *(Lets out an extremely evil laugh.)*
- WUNDERMAN:** *(To ARTISTS.)* Quick! Draw a hero to fight this villain!
- 35 *(As the ARTISTS raise their pens, they are immediately FROZEN in the act by SHOCK CLOCK.)*
- SHOCK CLOCK:** Sorry, guys, but I can't let you do that. I don't like superheroes. They can be annoying little creatures. *(To the MINUTOS.)* Minutos! Take these people and their pens away!
- 40 **MINUTOS:** *(Start pulling WUNDERMAN and the ARTISTS OFF*

1 *RIGHT.*) Yes, oh Chronological One!

SHOCK CLOCK: Put them in my Time Freezer! They can enjoy a little stint in suspended animation. Ah, yes, my time has finally come! I am about to become rich, famous, powerful. I'll take what I want. No one will be able to stop me because I can stop them first. I can freeze them in the moment. I am, after all, Dr. Shock Clock!

5 **MINUTOS:** (*Machine-like.*) Tick tock, tick tock, shock the clock, tick tock! Tick tock, tick tock, make time stop, tick tock!

SHOCK CLOCK: Very good, my little Minutos.

10 **MINUTO #1:** You're the supreme commander of time!

MINUTO #2: The king of crime.

SHOCK CLOCK: (*Preening.*) How right you are!

MINUTO #3: You're the ticking Time Lord.

MINUTOS: You're Dr. Shock Clock!

15 **SHOCK CLOCK:** Ticking Time Lord—I like that. Very appropriate, I must say. And now I think the moment has come for me to embark on my career in crime. (*To the MINUTOS.*) Take all the clocks and timepieces! We're going to find a more appropriate place for my headquarters. Somewhere in Times Square, I think. (*As he and the MINUTOS EXIT, he looks at the panel.*) Not bad, but I think I'm much better looking in real life. (*Laughs evilly as he EXITS RIGHT. LIGHTS OUT.*)

20

End of Scene Three

ACT ONE

Scene Four

SPOTLIGHT UP: On the NARRATOR, FAR DOWN RIGHT.

NARRATOR: Woe to the comic book man who oversteps his bounds. Wunderman was one such as these. Luckily, he had Stanley Leonardo Sappovitz waiting patiently in the wings. (*EXITS RIGHT. LIGHTS UP FULL on WUNDERMAN'S office.*)

25

STANLEY: (*ENTERS RIGHT.*) Mr Wunderman? Mr. Wunderman? Gee, where is everyone? I thought I heard a lot of noise up here a minute ago. (*Looks around and sees the panel of Shock Clock.*) Boy! That is an evil-looking villain! I wonder what series they're going to use him in. (*Looks around some more. Takes out pen and small sketch pad.*) I think I'll just sit awhile and draw with my new pen until everyone comes back. (*Sits on bench at CENTER.*) If I do a really good picture, maybe Mr. Wunderman will like it and let me be an artist for one of his books. (*Sits quietly, drawing. After a few moments, STAR GUY pops up from behind one of the*

30

35

1 *large blocks. [NOTE: STAR GUY, TRIPLE TIME, BLOSSOM and WOMBAT WOMAN can appear from anywhere ONSTAGE or can simply ENTER on cue.]*

5 **STAR GUY:** It's Star Guy! *(Strikes a pose with a big smile on his face—something he does frequently after speaking.)*

STANLEY: *(So startled he falls off the bench.)* Who—who are you?

STAR GUY: I just told you—Star Guy. I'm the best-looking, most charismatic, charming and popular superhero around.

10 **STANLEY:** *(Looks at STAR GUY, then looks at the picture he was drawing, then looks back at STAR GUY.)* This is very strange. You look exactly like the superhero in the picture I just drew.

STAR GUY: Of course I do. I am that superhero. You drew me.

STANLEY: I... I drew you?

STAR GUY: *(Smooths his hair back.)* And I must say, you have very

15 good taste in superheroes.

STANLEY: But how could I have drawn you, and then just have you appear like that?

STAR GUY: Simple. You're using a pen from Peloponnesia. Everything you draw comes to life. And man, oh man, are the girls in this town

20 going to thank you for me.

STANLEY: *(Looks at his pen.)* This is very strange.

STAR GUY: You're repeating yourself. Hey... uh, what's your name?

STANLEY: Stanley. Stanley Leonardo Sappovitz.

STAR GUY: Cool. Now listen, Stan, you really aced it drawing me, but

25 you left me a little defenseless, you know.

STANLEY: Defenseless?

STAR GUY: Right. Aside from my good looks, which I admit are pretty outstanding, I don't have any weapons. I need you to draw me something with power, Stan, something other-worldly, you know.

30 **STANLEY:** I could draw you a laser gun or maybe some kind of cosmic sword.

STAR GUY: No, no, no. What I need, Stan my man, is something special, something to fit my star-like persona. Something like a... a charisma ray!

35 **STANLEY:** A charisma ray?

STAR GUY: Right! Whenever I shoot it, everyone falls at my feet, screaming my name, begging for an autograph.

STANLEY: That's a very unusual weapon for a superhero, but I guess I could try to draw something like that. *(Starts to draw.)* How's

40 this? *(Shows his pad to STAR GUY, and the charisma ray comes*

1 *flying ONSTAGE from the wings [Any mirror or weapon-like prop will suffice... be creative! See PRODUCTION NOTES.]*

STAR GUY: *(Catches it, looks it over.)* Hmm... Let me just fly outside and give it a try. *(Leaps in the air as if to take off and falls flat on his face. Gets up, gives STANLEY a dirty look.)*

5 **STANLEY:** Sorry, I guess I didn't draw you with the power to fly.

STAR GUY: You "guess" you didn't draw me with the power to fly?! What's this cape for?! Capes are for flying—that's what they're for. They're for fluttering out behind you and looking dramatic when you land. What good are they if you can't fly?

10 **STANLEY:** Well, they look really good. Especially with that tight bodysuit I gave you.

STAR GUY: *(Looks himself over.)* Well, you're right, there. I do look pretty good, don't I? *(Flexes his muscles.)* I work out, you know.

15 **STANLEY:** And with your charisma ray, you really don't need to fly.

STAR GUY: I suppose not. Any superhero can fly, but how many have my charisma? *(Preens.)*

STANLEY: You were going to try it out.

STAR GUY: What?

20 **STANLEY:** Your charisma ray. You were going to try it out.

STAR GUY: *(Looks at his ray.)* Right. I'll just... run... outside and check it out. *(Runs FAR DOWN RIGHT where a spot comes up on THREE GIRLS.)* Hey, girls, want to go out with a superhero?

GIRL #1: Get lost, creep! *(STAR GUY zaps them with his charisma ray. OPTIONAL SOUND EFFECT: ZAPPING SOUND. The SPOT TURNS RED, and they fall on their knees screaming.)*

25 **GIRL #2:** It's Star Guy!

GIRL #3: Star Guy!

GIRL #1: Give me your autograph, please!

30 **GIRL #2:** I love you, Star Guy! *(Wraps her arms around his legs.)*

GIRL #3: You're my hero!

GIRL #1: You're my destiny!

GIRL #2: You're my... you're my American idol! *(They continue screaming as the SPOT GOES OUT and STAR GUY returns to STANLEY.)*

35 **STAR GUY:** Congratulations, Stan. My charisma ray works to perfection! Of course, why wouldn't it with someone like me using it?

STANLEY: I'm glad you like it. I modeled it after a little-known comic book hero's—

40 **STAR GUY:** *(Ignores him.)* Where's the rest of my gang?

PRODUCTION NOTES

PROPERTIES

ONSTAGE, ACT ONE, Scene One: Large and small rehearsal blocks (The minimum number needed would be two tall blocks [desk height] and two short blocks [about a foot tall]. Some blocks should be large enough to conceal an actor entirely to effect “magical” appearances and disappearances onstage).

BROUGHT ON, ACT ONE, Scene One:

Comic books (KIDS)

Sketch pad and pen (STANLEY)

Superhero t-shirt, lunch box or pillowcase (NARRATOR)

ONSTAGE, ACT ONE, Scene Two: Two desks with papers and folders, wastebasket, at least two chairs, purse [on desk], broom, bench. (NOTE: desks and bench can be made using large and small rehearsal blocks.)

BROUGHT ON, ACT ONE, Scene Two:

Piece of paper [in pocket], box containing pens, catalog (STANLEY)

Folder with papers (VIOLA)

ONSTAGE, ACT ONE, Scene Three: Same as Scene Two, but with a large panel drawing of Dr. Shock Clock covered by a black drape.

BROUGHT ON, ACT ONE, Scene Three:

Sketch pads, pens (ARTISTS)

Clocks, hourglasses, sundials and other time-related items (MINUTOS)

ONSTAGE, ACT ONE, Scene Four: Same as Scene Three.

BROUGHT ON, ACT ONE, Scene Four:

Sketch pad and pen, piece of paper [in pocket] (STANLEY)

Charisma ray, cape, hat and mask (thrown ONSTAGE from the wings)

Flowers and leaves (BLOSSOM)

ONSTAGE, ACT ONE, Scene Five: Counter with drawer of cash to resemble bank counter (BANK), another counter for jewelry store, crate (GOLD WAREHOUSE). [Counters can be achieved by stacking short blocks on top of the tall blocks.]

BROUGHT ON, ACT ONE, Scene Five:

Large sack (MINUTOS)

Jewelry (SALESMAN)

Purse (WOMAN)

ONSTAGE, ACT TWO, Scene One: Same as Scene Three, but with a newspaper on the desk.

ONSTAGE, ACT TWO, Scene Two: Small stage or platform with microphone.

BROUGHT ON, ACT TWO, Scene Two:

Small hand mirror (STAR GUY)

Small, expensive-looking wooden box (ROTTEN PENNY)

Sacks (MINUTOS)

Flower (BLOSSOM)

Whistles, pen and notepad (POLICEMEN)

ONSTAGE, ACT TWO, Scene Three: Same as Scene Three, but the box on WUNDERMAN'S desk now contains a large eraser.

BROUGHT ON, ACT TWO, Scene Three:

Handkerchief (NARRATOR)

ONSTAGE, ACT TWO, Scene Four: Large and small rehearsal blocks arranged to look like a rooftop.

BROUGHT ON, ACT TWO, Scene Four:

Newspapers (NEWSBOY)

Large eraser and shield (STANLEY)

Clocks, hourglasses, sundials and other time-related items (MINUTOS)

ONSTAGE, ACT TWO, Scene Five: Same as Scene Two.

BROUGHT ON, ACT TWO, Scene Five:

Broom, Eraser man shirt (STANLEY)

COSTUMES

Like the sets, costumes can be simple. Be creative and have fun!

SHOCK CLOCK'S costume should probably be the most elaborate, embellished with a variety of watches, clocks and hourglasses.

The painting of Shock Clock should match the costume as closely as possible.

The MINUTOS can wear similar renditions of their leader's outfit but with less flare.

NARRATOR could wear some kind of unusual suit or tuxedo (think of the Joker's in *Batman*), but any colorful costume will do.

VIOLA wears a wide belt as part of her costume. For ACT TWO, Scene Two, she might wear a different outfit but with the same belt. Eliminate her line in ACT TWO, Scene One to avoid costume change.

THE FABULOUS FOUR wear unitards or tights, capes and accessories.

WOMBAT WOMAN could wear a furry jumpsuit with a large pocket as a base along with a hat, which she wears at a slant on her head halfway through the play. STAR GUY wears brightly colored, baggy basketball shorts in ACT TWO, Scene TWO.

STANLEY could wear everyday clothes or a janitor's outfit. In the opening scene, he wears a baseball cap to look like a kid. In the final scene, he wears an "Eraser Man" t-shirt underneath his other

clothes. As “Eraser Man,” he wears VIOLA’S belt with WOMBAT WOMAN’S cape and mask.

POLICEMEN wear standard uniforms.

If you choose to use the DREAM SUPERHEROES in ACT ONE, Scene Two and ACT TWO, Scene Four, feel free to change the names to fit any costume which may already exist in your theater’s inventory.

MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECTS

The Comic Book Artist is a satire of the comic book genre and should be done in an exaggerated, melodramatic style. Optional music has been suggested throughout the play to enhance this melodramatic feel. Live or taped piano accompaniment as follows: Dreamy music, some sort of fanfare music, background music for drawing, melodramatic music, suspenseful scene change music, rock music for concert, sappy violin music, battle music and heroic music.

For sound effects, crowd noise, a “zapping” sound for STAR GUY’S charisma ray, a ticking clock and a slide whistle also add to the show but are not required.

FLEXIBLE CASTING

The show can be done with as few as 15 actors (with much doubling) or as many as 35 or even more if each bit part is filled by a separate actor. In addition, there is an almost unlimited potential for extras. Use as many as you like for crowd scenes, ROTTEN PENNY’S band, and so on. STANLEY and STAR GUY are the only characters who absolutely must be male.

PROPS FLYING ONSTAGE

Several times items that are drawn with the Powerful Pens from Peloponnesia “fly onstage.” There are several options for achieving this effect. The items might be simply thrown in from the wings. They could also be flown in on hooks suspended from a rope and pulley system strung over the stage. Another option is to have a stagehand hiding behind a rehearsal block thrust them into the air on cue.

We hope you've enjoyed this script sample.

We encourage you to read the entire script before making your final decision.

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