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CHARACTERS

REBECCA, a young woman.

TOM, a young man.

TIME

The present.

SETTING

REBECCA and TOM are standing onstage.

TOM is holding a superhero comic book. He and REBECCA are waiting.

TOM: How much longer we gonna wait?

REBECCA viciously karate kicks TOM while yelling "KA-POW!" In pain, he drops to the ground.

REBECCA: What did I just tell you, Tom?

TOM: To read my comic book.

REBECCA: And?

TOM: To stop asking you "how much longer."

REBECCA: Exactamundo. And did you read your comic book and stop asking "how much longer"?

TOM: No.

REBECCA: Then you deserved what you got.

TOM: I did?

REBECCA: Here, let me help you up.

REBECCA helps TOM to his feet. As soon as he is standing, she viciously karate kicks again while yelling "WHAMMO." He falls to the floor, writhing in even more pain than before.

Who was the first costumed villain Wonder Woman ever faced? I need to know for an epic poem I'm writing.

TOM: *Trying unsuccessfully to speak.* D

REBECCA: *Bending down to him.* Huh?

TOM: D

REBECCA: You're not making sense.

TOM: Da. Da. Da.

REBECCA: C'mon. Spit it out.

TOM: Doctor Poison.

REBECCA: *Standing straight.* Cool.

TOM makes a half-hearted attempt at standing and falls back to the ground.

You okay?

TOM shakes his head "no."

Are you Bucky by any chance?

TOM shakes his head "no."

'Cause Bucky was Captain America's sidekick, and sidekicks are cool.

TOM: *With effort.* Can you spare some chewing gum?

REBECCA: Sure.

She hands TOM a wrapped red gum ball.

I gotta warn you, though. That gum barely has any flavor at all.

TOM: Yeah?

He unwraps the red gum ball and pops it into his mouth. He begins chewing it. Spitting out the gum; his tongue is on fire:

AAAAAAHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!

REBECCA: I lied. That was actually habanero gum. You know, made from those scalding hot habanero peppers.

TOM: *Pleading.* Water.

REBECCA: I'm creating a new superhero, Habanero Man.

TOM: *Pleading.* Water.

REBECCA: He can breathe fire.

TOM: *Pleading.* Water.

REBECCA: His sidekick will be Banana Pepper Girl.

TOM: *Pleading.* Water.

REBECCA: Sidekicks are soooo cool. Have I told you that?

TOM: *Pleading.* Water.

REBECCA: Water? You must like Aqua Man.

TOM: *Pleading.* Please. Water.

REBECCA: Aqua Man was one of the founders of the Justice League.

TOM faints.

REBECCA: Did you just faint, or are you playing possum?

She kicks TOM's leg.

Guess you really did faint.

She exits and returns with a cup of water, which she splashes on TOM's face. TOM is jolted awake.

TOM: Water!

REBECCA: Yep. That's what you got.

TOM: More. Water.

REBECCA: Sorry. That was the last of it.

TOM manages to stand.

You look sorta sickly. Are you okay?

TOM nods that he is okay.

Are you a mime? I really, really hate mimes. Last mime I came across, I kicked him.

TOM cowers.

TOM: Rebecca, can you just chill for a second?

REBECCA: Chill?

TOM: Yes, chill.

REBECCA: Okay.

TOM: Thank you.

REBECCA: You're welcome. *Pause.* You can relax. I'm done kicking you.

TOM tentatively relaxes. A pause.

TOM: Whew.

REBECCA viciously kicks TOM again, this time while yelling "HI-YA!" He falls, in tears, unable to breathe.

REBECCA: *After he writhes a bit.* That floor's filthy. Want me to help you up?

TOM: *Without sound. Mouthing the word.* No.

REBECCA: Cool, I could read your lips just now. *Pause*. Do you have any rare comic books? Huh? Do ya?

TOM: *Struggling*. No.

REBECCA: I do. My grandpappy gave me a 1947 copy of the *Blonde Phantom*. Ever heard of *Blonde Phantom* comic books?

TOM: *Still struggling*. No.

REBECCA: The *Blonde Phantom*'s this awesome crime-fighter chick. She's absolutely gorgeous. Unlike *She-Hulk*, who is ugly with a capital "U." You ever read any *She-Hulk* comics?

TOM: *Still struggling*. No.

REBECCA: There's this one comic book, started in the nineteen-sixties, called the *Inferior Five*. You ever read the *Inferior Five*?

TOM: *Still struggling*. No.

REBECCA: One of the *Inferior Five* is named Dumb Bunny. She's stupid but super strong. You wouldn't want to get on Dumb Bunny's bad side.

TOM *moans in pain*.

REBECCA: What's wrong? You're not your usual cheerful self.

TOM: Please.

REBECCA: Please what?

TOM: Stop.

REBECCA: Stop what?

TOM: Kicking.

REBECCA: Kicking what?

TOM: Me.

REBECCA: Please stop kicking you?

TOM: Yes.

REBECCA: Why?

TOM: What?

REBECCA: Why should I stop kicking you?

TOM: 'Cause.

REBECCA: 'Cause why?

TOM: It hurts.

REBECCA: Not me.

TOM: You?

REBECCA: It doesn't hurt me.

TOM: You?

REBECCA: Actually, it feels great, unleashing all that energy.

TOM: I'm . . .

REBECCA: Yes?

TOM: In some real pain.

REBECCA: Sorry—no pain, no gain. Truth and justice rarely win the day without a little violence.

TOM: Truth and justice?

REBECCA: I find that truth and justice is a common theme in comic books.

TOM: I think . . .

Slight pause.

REBECCA: Uh-huh?

TOM: That . . .

Slight pause.

REBECCA: Yeah?

TOM: You're crazy.

REBECCA: Yep, I'm crazy for comic books. In fact, Batman was born in a 1939 issue of *Detective Comics*. It only cost ten cents. Ten cents, I tell you.

TOM: I'm leaving.

REBECCA: Now?

TOM: Yes.

REBECCA: Right now?

TOM: Yes.

REBECCA: Where will you go?

TOM: I don't know, and I don't care.

REBECCA: But I was just about to give a lecture on the Curse of Kordax.

TOM: I don't care about the Curse of Kordax, or any other curse.

He begins to exit.

REBECCA: Wait!

TOM: *Stopping.* What?

REBECCA: I'll miss you.

TOM: Well, I won't miss you.

He exits.

REBECCA: *After him:*

Who will I talk to about comic books?

Slight pause, waving after him:

Bye.

To audience:

You know, he's kinda cute. If you squint your eyes a little when you look at him.

More quietly: He never actually came out and said it, but I think he likes me.

She puts on a yellow cape and a superhero eye mask. To audience:

About the Curse of Kordax. In ancient Atlantis there lived an evil tyrant named Kordax. He had blond hair and could communicate with marine life. Because he was evil and a tyrant, the people of Atlantis hated him. So much so, that if you were born in Atlantis with blond hair like Kordax, you were left to die as a baby. Aquaman was born in Atlantis and had blond hair. Therefore, he was left to die as a baby. Still, he overcame his blond hair and grew up to help start the Justice League. The moral of the story: never give up. Always fight for truth and justice, no matter what.

TOM returns.

TOM: Who are you, masked princess?

REBECCA: I'm Banana Pepper Girl. Together with Habanero Man, I fight for truth and justice.

TOM: Cool.

REBECCA: And my superhuman power is kicking.

She violently kicks TOM while yelling "WA-BAM!" He falls to the ground.

TOM: Banana Pepper Girl, I love you.

Smiling, she strikes a triumphant superhero pose. Blackout.

END OF PLAY