

VILLAINS AND ZOMBIES

By Bradley Walton

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VILLAINS AND ZOMBIES

A Full-Length Drama

By Bradley Walton

SYNOPSIS: Nine years ago, the world's most powerful super hero went insane. In a deadly battle that lasted only seconds, he attacked his arch-enemies in their lair and then vanished without a trace. Now, with a plague of zombies sweeping the globe, the surviving villains return to the ruins of their former stronghold to mourn the dead, question their past choices, and confront the future. Best described as a mixture of *Watchmen*, *Titanic*, *The Alamo*, and *Night of the Living Dead*, *VILLAINS AND ZOMBIES* will appeal to fans of super heroes and horror while engaging the serious-minded theatergoer with flawed and very human characters struggling to face the ends of their lives with dignity, honesty, and love.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 male, 1 female, 8-10 either, Doubling Possible)

- TED REID (m).....A former super villain who called himself “North”.
(245 lines)
- MALIN REID (f)Ted’s ex-wife, a former super villain who called herself “South”. *(215 lines)*
- MARK/MARY FREWER (m/f)A former super villain who called himself “Harrowing Hedgehog”. *(121 lines)*
- BILLY/BILLIE GOODE (m/f)A former super villain who called himself “Sonic Stapler”.
(115 lines)
- TONI/TONY MENNELL (m/f).....A former super villain who called herself “Black Librarian”. *(137 lines)*
- MONSTRO (m/f).....A former super villain with the appearance of a monster or beast. *(19 lines)*

VILLAINS AND ZOMBIES

- PATRICK/PATRICIA HALEY (m/f) A former super villain who called himself “Tripod”.
(75 lines)
- THUMP (m/f) A former super villain with anger management issues.
(31 lines)
- JEFFREY/JENNY ALLAN (m/f) A former super villain who called himself “Untouchable”.
(29 lines)
- GUILTY MAN/WOMAN (m/f) A former super villain, particularly nasty. (50 lines)
- ATTACK ZOMBIE (m/f) (4 lines)
- INTERROGATION ZOMBIE (m/f) (12 lines)

DOUBLING: THUMP or MONSTRO may double as INTERROGATION ZOMBIE or GUILTY MAN.

All characters are in their mid-thirties to early forties. Adjust pronouns and other words as necessary for gender flexible roles.

COSTUMES: All of the former super villain characters except for GUILTY MAN, MONSTRO, and THUMP wear normal street clothing.

TONI is dressed in black.

MONSTRO wears dirty, ragged clothing.

THUMP’s clothing should be punk or goth.

GUILTY MAN wears a bizarre suit, with a noose as a necktie.

The ZOMBIES wear torn, ragged clothing.

STAGING: The play is set in the devastated remains of a super villain team’s former underground headquarters. This may be represented with an elaborate set, or simply with broken tables and chairs, non-specific debris, etc. The room should look like someone fought a war in it—and lost. If possible, there should be walls with break-away sections for the zombies to punch through, and red lights to shine through those holes, as well as red stage lights from above, but these are optional.

PROPERTIES

- cell phones – TED and MALIN
- duffle bag or backpack – MARK
- scarf or fabric to tie into a sling – in MARK’s bag
- 2 small bags of potato chips – in MARK’s bag
- staple gun – MARK
- hammer, crowbar, or metal pipe – TONI, MARK, PATRICK
- rope, gag – INTERROGRATION ZOMBIE
- chair – ON STAGE

PREVIOUS PRODUCTIONS

VILLAINS AND ZOMBIES premiered April 30-May 1, 2010 as “Super Villains and Zombies” at Harrisonburg High School in Harrisonburg, Virginia. It was produced by Stanley Swartz, stage managed by Ama Ansah, and directed by the author, with the following cast:

Malin Reid / “South”	KAITI CRITTENDEN
Ted Reid / “North”	PAUL HAIRSTON
Mary Frewer / “Harrowing Hedgehog”	ALLISON MCKENZIE
Billie Goode / “Sonic Stapler”	CATHERINE HALPERN
Tony Mennell / “Black Librarian”	CHRIS PYLE
Monstro	TOMMY TRAN
Patricia Haley / “Tripod”	SHEETAL KUNVER
Thump	KAIT ARTHUR
Attack Zombie	KEA KISER
Interrogation Zombie	ZACH MCDONNELL
Jenny Allen / “Untouchable”	PAULINA RENDON
Guilty Man	SAM MARTIN

AUTHOR NOTES: I dearly love this script. Of all the things I've written to date, this one might be my favorite. I started with a concept and an ending, and when I sat down to do the writing, everything else just fell spontaneously out of my head, neatly into place, very, very quickly. I love the characters. I love the fact that even though they're super villains, they act like people you might know. I love that at the heart of the play is an estranged couple who still love each other. I love that the play is about redemption, and that even someone who doesn't want to be redeemed can still be a little bit heroic. I love that the play is about making peace with life in the face of death.

On a production level, I love that the set can be incredibly simple or incredibly complex. *The ruins of a super villain team's former underground headquarters.* You could go in so many directions with that. My production had by far the largest set of any show I've ever directed. Check out the pictures on the Brooklyn Publishers website. It was amazing. I loved that set. When I walked around the stage, I felt like I was *there*. Fun fact: All of the really large set components...the steps and walls and platforms...were left over from a production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* that the school had just wrapped up.

Our production was challenging. It was a stretch for my group of teenage actors to play emotionally and morally damaged 35-to-40-year-olds with life experiences unlike anything the students had been through. And there were some extremely stressful 11th-hour script rewrites I had to make in order to work around a sick cast member. I was glad when it was over. But I was also glad that we had done it. Did I mention that I love this script?

ACT I

AT RISE: *The devastated remnants of a super villain team's former underground headquarters. MALIN REID, a woman in her mid-thirties, sifts through pieces of the wreckage. After a few moments, TED REID, also in his mid-thirties, enters. HE is her ex-husband. The two of them were once a super villain duo. Both are dressed in normal clothing, having long since retired from crime.*

MALIN: Who's there?

TED: Malin? Is that you?

MALIN: Ted?

TED: You're alive!

MALIN: Yeah. For now, anyway. I'm not sure how long that's gonna last.

TED: What're you doing here?

MALIN: I dunno. I guess I thought—I was hoping maybe there'd be some kind of tech left. Some sort of weapons. Doctor Void used to keep all kinds of stuff stashed here.

TED: You find anything?

MALIN: Just memories. (*Beat.*) Oh, geez. Did I actually just say that?

TED: What?

MALIN: I sound like a stupid greeting card or a Broadway musical. The world is falling apart outside and I'm standing in a...a tomb where I watched my friends die, and I'm whining about memories.

TED: Don't worry about it. I understand.

MALIN: There's a zombie plague outside, Ted! There are dead people walking the streets eating living people, and the leftovers are coming back to life as more zombies! This is not the time to be sentimental!

TED: Yeah, I get that. But when was the last time you were here?

MALIN: Not since Zack, Tech Bomb, Laura, Crimson Crusher, and Murray died. (*Beat.*) I ran. I didn't even look back.

TED: I know. I was right behind you.

MALIN: I heard Laura scream and I didn't try to help.

TED: I know. I didn't, either. It's okay.

MALIN: It's not okay! She was my friend! We used to rob armored trucks and go shopping together! And she was in trouble and I ran!

TED: There was no way you could've helped her. The Olympian was nuts. He was out of his mind, okay? There was no reasoning with him. There was no fighting him. At least not for you and me. We weren't powerful enough. We wouldn't have lasted two seconds against him.

MALIN: Like Laura.

TED: Yeah. Like Laura.

MALIN: Sorry. I need to pull myself together.

TED: Yeah, you're gonna have to do that.

MALIN: Right. Give me a minute, okay?

TED: Sure.

MALIN: I can't believe this is happening.

TED: So, um...are you able to get any kind of cell phone or wireless reception down here?

MALIN: (*Checking her cell phone.*) Not a thing. You?

TED: (*Checking his cell phone.*) Nothing. Is there anything here we could use to defend ourselves against what's happening outside?

MALIN: No.

TED: You haven't found anything?

MALIN: I found plenty. Just nothing that'll do us any good.

TED: Maybe we can salvage something. What's here?

MALIN: Smashed equipment. Pieces of furniture. Bones.

TED: Bones?

MALIN: Yeah. You caught what I said about this being a tomb, right? The bodies are still here.

TED: Oh man, that's...they never told the cops about this place, did they?

MALIN: No. I mean, I never heard about it on the news. But I never knew for sure. Not 'til now. After the Olympian went on his rampage, it looks like his buddies came along and sealed the place off pretty good. Swept it under the rug. Pretended it never happened.

TED: Yeah. I wondered, too. Figured that's what must've happened. But I could never quite believe it. I mean, they were super heroes. They were supposed to be the good guys, for crying out loud. One of their own went crazy and killed a bunch of us...how could they never admit to that?

MALIN: I guess super heroes are people, too.

TED: I just...it's so weird. I spent years fighting them, and now I'm angry because I expected better of them. (*Beat.*) Wow, look at this place. Olympian did a number, didn't he?

MALIN: That was the scariest thing I ever saw in my life, Ted. Even now. Even with what's going on outside. That was worse. I mean, I know he was supposed to be our enemy and we fought against him sometimes with the others, but it was hard not to look up to him a little, you know?

TED: Yeah, I know.

MALIN: He was the most physically powerful being on the planet, and he only wanted to help people. And then one day he just smashes in here through the ceiling. Punches a hole through concrete and steel like it's nothing. One second we're all sitting here talking, and the next there's falling debris and blood and screaming and I couldn't figure out what was happening, he was moving so fast. But then he slowed down for half a second and I saw. I never realized what he meant to me until that moment. Having this peaceful, benevolent, godlike being in the world. He was our enemy, yeah, but knowing he was around...he made me feel safe. And I never realized it. Not 'til right then. Not 'til the second he looked at me, and I felt my suit's temperature skyrocket. It wasn't me. I wasn't using my powers. He was using his heat vision, and he intended to kill me with it. And then Crimson Crusher punched him from behind, and you pushed me towards the door, and I ran.

TED: Have any of the survivors been in touch with you since we split up?

MALIN: Jeffrey found me a while back. We went out to lunch.

TED: He made it out, huh?

MALIN: Yeah. You didn't know?

TED: No. I assumed any other survivors went into hiding like we did, and it's not like most of us knew each other's real names. I know who I saw die in the first couple of seconds, but beyond that...I have no idea.

MALIN: Okay, well...Doctor Void is dead.

TED: Jeffrey told you?

MALIN: No. Those bones I found? Some of them were in his costume.

TED: That's about the last thing I wanted to hear. We really could have used him right now.

MALIN: Is that why you came here? You were hoping to find him?

TED: I don't know. I came here because...I really didn't know where else to go. I mean, this used to be our secret base. Our sanctuary. This is where the bad guys used to hang out together. And we may not have all gotten along or even liked each other, but all of us together in one place...it felt safe. Like nobody would ever dare mess with us here.

MALIN: Until somebody did.

TED: Yeah. So. Do you know about anyone else?

MALIN: Jeffrey said that Harrowing Hedgehog got out, and so did Black Librarian.

TED: Are you serious?

MALIN: Yeah.

TED: Doctor Void and the Crimson Crusher are both dead, but those two idiots survived?

MALIN: That's what Jeffrey said.

TED: What about the Guilty Man?

MALIN: No idea. I wouldn't miss him much if he were gone. He was a creepy psychopath.

TED: And yet, we hung out with him.

MALIN: What's that say about us?

TED: That we watched out for our own.

MALIN: Not in the end.

TED: No. Not in the end. (*Beat.*) Did Jeffrey have word on anybody else?

MALIN: No.

TED: Tripod? Microwave Man? Thump?

MALIN: Nothing.

TED: I figure Monstro's probably dead.

MALIN: I don't see any way he could've kept out of the public eye for nine years if he wasn't. Not with the way he looked. Poor guy.

TED: How about Airborne?

MALIN: Airborne...the super villain with the world's ugliest tattoo.

TED: Yeah...that hideous winged skull on his shoulder that he said his cousin did when they were both drunk.

MALIN: No idea if he's alive.

TED: Sonic Stapler?

MALIN: Don't know.

TED: He probably made it out.

MALIN: You think so?

TED: That idiot could survive anything. I mean, he carried those ridiculous staple guns that fired the sound waves—

MALIN: And actual staples.

TED: Staples propelled by sound waves—I think that's how it worked. I was in awe that he never managed to get himself killed.

MALIN: Up until the day Olympian busted in here, the good guys didn't kill.

TED: I meant by one of us. I thought for sure the Guilty Man would eventually get fed up and murder him.

MALIN: It probably just would've been a matter of time.

TED: Probably.

MALIN: So what do we do now?

TED: How thoroughly have you searched the place?

MALIN: I got here about half an hour before you did.

TED: Have you checked any of the side rooms?

MALIN: I checked Void's lab. It was trashed.

TED: And another one of our best chances goes down the toilet.

MALIN: I haven't looked in the game room, but the door was torn off, and anyway...there was never anything in there but a pool table and some old Nintendo consoles. (*Update reference as necessary.*)

TED: What about the lockers?

MALIN: Haven't looked.

TED: We should check those.

MALIN: You're right. Hedgehog probably had some dirty socks stashed away. Maybe we could use those against the zombies.

TED: You'd feel funny if we tried that and it worked.

MALIN: Hedgehog was the most disgusting person I ever met in my life. If anybody's socks could stop zombies, it would be his.
(Pause.) Look, I...it's good to see you again.

TED: Thanks. You too.

MALIN: I'm sorry things didn't work out for us.

TED: S'okay. It was a marriage grounded entirely on the thrill of dressing up in silly clothes and driving the cops and super guys nuts. Once that was gone, there really wasn't anything left.

MALIN: I guess. But it was fun while it lasted.

TED: Yeah, it was.

TED and MALIN gaze at each other. MARK FREWER enters. HE is an unkempt man in his forties. HE is carrying a duffle bag or backpack.

MARK: North and South? Is that you?

TED and MALIN exchange a quick glance, trying to decide how to answer.

TED: We used to be. Not anymore. Who're you?

MARK: (Puts down the bag.) Aw, come on. I know you never saw me without my mask, but I'd hope you'd recognize my voice.

MALIN: Harrowing Hedgehog?

MARK: I go by Mark these days, but yeah. That's me. How'd you guys get in?

TED: The passage under the bakery two blocks down.

MALIN: I came in through the hidden door in the subway tunnel.

MARK: Those are both still working?

TED: Apparently so.

MARK: I came in through the park.

TED: There was an entrance from the park?

MALIN: I never knew about that.

MARK: That one was a secret.

TED: How'd you know about it?

MARK: (Ignoring the question.) I assume you figured out the main doors are blocked off.

MALIN: Yeah.

MARK: Do you know if any of the others are coming?

TED: The others?

MARK: Yeah. The old gang. The ones who are still around, anyway.

TED: I have no idea. Malin—South—she's the first one I've talked to in years.

MARK: What...you mean you guys aren't together anymore?

MALIN: We divorced eight years ago.

MARK: Aw, man! That sucks! You always seemed like such a great couple! What happened?

TED: Let's just say that everything that went down here...put a lot of stress on the relationship, and leave it at that, okay?

MARK: Sure. Sure. No problem. I understand. I mean, not really I don't. Because I was never lucky enough to have a girlfriend, much less a wife, but I can sort of guess if I use my imagination really hard. You know what? I'm going to shut up about that now.

MALIN: That'd be great, thanks.

MARK: So. I'm guessing you noticed the thing with the zombies?

TED: Look, Hedgehog, I can accept the fact that you're stupid, but I'd appreciate it if you didn't assume that we're stupid, too.

MARK: Ah, just like old times.

TED: No! Not just like old times! The headquarters are in ruins. Probably half of us are dead. The survivors all quit the super villain game. Our marriage ended. The old times are gone. Dead and buried. There is no more running around in spandex and armor picking fights with the good guys. These are the new times. We live in fear of the Olympian coming back and we keep a low profile. And now there are zombies outside and all we can do is sit tight, hope the heroes are able to deal with them, and maybe find some weapons so we can defend ourselves if we have to.

MARK: Wow. Okay. That was...there was a lot in there that um...all right, first off...sorry about the "old times" thing. Believe me, I'm aware of the present. I know how things are. I just get nostalgic. Those were good times. I miss 'em, y'know?

TED: Yeah. Look, I...sorry. I shouldn't have snapped like that.

MARK: S'okay. Um...I'm guessing from that thing you said about the heroes dealing with the zombies...you haven't heard the latest?

MALIN: What?

MARK: Some of the heroes have been turned into zombies.

TED: You've gotta be messing with me.

MARK: I wish.

MALIN: Who?

MARK: Arthropod and Flag Bearer.

TED: Wow. That's...wow.

MARK: I'm also guessing that since you mentioned trying to find weapons...you don't still have those suits that gave you your powers, do you?

MALIN: No. We destroyed them. We got rid of all the evidence we could that linked us to our super villain personas.

MARK: In case Olympian ever came back.

TED: Yeah.

MARK: And if you guys divorced, then there really was no point. Those suits only worked when they were close to each other, didn't they? That's how you started out working as a team.

MALIN: Yeah.

MARK: I don't guess the lab you stole them from had any more prototypes sitting around, did they?

MALIN: No.

MARK: I'm sorry to hear that. If we could've frozen or burned up some zombies, that might've come in handy.

TED: I think I can safely say that thought had already occurred to both of us, but thank you for stating the obvious.

MALIN: You haven't heard anything about Olympian returning, have you?

MARK: What, to fight the zombies? No.

MALIN: Good.

Pause.

MARK: It's hard to believe this used to be our sanctuary, isn't it?

TED: I can't believe the place still has lights.

MARK: I fixed the backup generators a while back.

TED: You fixed the backup generators? How would you even know how to fix a generator, and why would you come back to do it?

MARK: Just because I'm socially awkward doesn't make me stupid, North. And just because I used to take things that weren't mine doesn't mean I actually needed them. (*MARK crosses to a particularly debris-strewn part of the stage.*)

MALIN: Hedgehog?

MARK: Yes, South?

MALIN: Um...Crimson Crusher's body...what's left of it...it's about two feet from where you're standing.

MARK: I remember. He lasted almost six seconds before Olympian tore him in half. I wouldn't have thought he had it in him. He probably saved our lives. That might've been the bravest thing I ever saw in my life, him taking on Olympian like that. It's funny, I spent all that time around superheroes...admittedly, I was usually fighting them...but the guy who showed the most backbone when the chips were down...it was one of the villains. Never would have seen that coming. I wish I thought I had something like that in me. But if I did, I probably would have played for the other team.

MALIN: How'd you get out?

MARK: I didn't. I hid.

MALIN: Where?

MARK: One of the bathrooms.

MALIN: You're serious?

MARK: Completely.

MALIN: And Olympian didn't find you?

MARK: He never came looking. I heard him tearing the place apart for maybe twenty more seconds, and then it just stopped. I thought I heard voices at one point...but I'm not sure. Then somebody screamed, and that was it. I stayed in the bathroom for maybe half an hour...I was terrified. Then the door opened and I thought I was dead. Only it wasn't Olympian. It was Flag Bearer. The look he gave me was half surprise and half pity. All he said was, "Get out." So I did. The heroes were all here. Except for Olympian. He was gone. I remember seeing Microwave Man's helmet over in the corner and figuring the rest of him was probably around somewhere. The room was so strewn with debris that it was hard to tell where the bodies were. Not that I tried to look too closely. The heroes were all watching me, and I was afraid Olympian would show back up. I got my butt out of here. I went home, and I burned my costume. I told myself I was living to fight another day. But of course, deep down, I knew there weren't going to be any more fights. And that was that. They sealed the place up. The doors they could find, anyway. I finally worked up the nerve last year to come back and pay my respects. Fixed the generators, but didn't touch anything else. Thought about giving the bodies a proper burial. But then I figured, y'know, this was already their tomb. Let them rest in peace.

MALIN: Um...this zombie thing that's going on, and these skeletons in here...

MARK: I don't think they're gonna rise up and attack us, if that's what you mean. It's just the recent dead.

MALIN: Good. Glad to hear it.

MARK: If the two of you will excuse me, I'm going to go have a look in the locker room. I used to have a spare costume stashed away in there.

TED: Hedgehog—Mark—your costume didn't have weapons.

MARK: No, it didn't.

TED: Why do you want your spare?

MARK: I dunno. I guess...with what's happening...the zombies...maybe there's one more fight after all. (*Exits.*)

MALIN: That was really weird.

TED: He used to be so goofy.

MALIN: He still is, kind of.

TED: Yeah, but...he's changed.

MALIN: Of course he has. Everything else did. Why wouldn't he?

TED: The stuff he said about Crimson Crusher...

MALIN: Yeah, that was...

TED: I don't think Crusher was trying to be brave or even save anybody. I think he just got into a fight he couldn't win.

MALIN: Yeah. Probably. But if that's how Hedgehog wants to see it...

TED: It seems delusional.

MALIN: If he's able to find some comfort in how he remembers the dead, we should let him have it. I think he deserves that much.

BILLY GOODE and TONI MENNELL enter. TONI is dressed in black.

BILLY: All right, whoever you are, you'd better not be another friggin' zombie. 'Cause if you are, we're gonna kick your stinking zombie butts.

TONI: Not to imply zombie stench is restricted exclusively to the posterior regions.

MALIN: Black Librarian, is that you?

TONI: Indeed. North and South?

TED: Yeah. It's us.

TONI: My visage was never revealed in your presence. How did you ascertain my former alter ego?

MALIN: Nobody else we know talks like you.

TED: How'd you know it was us?

TONI: Your heights and builds, and the simple fact that you're together. The two of you were always a unit. I don't think I ever saw you apart. It's good to know that there's at least one thing that hasn't changed over the years.

MALIN: We divorced eight years ago.

TONI: Oh.

BILLY: Way to stick your leg in your mouth, Black Librarian.

TED: I'm guessing, from the sound of your voice, that you're Sonic Stapler.

BILLY: You betcha.

TED: I figured you were probably alive.

MALIN: We were just talking about you.

BILLY: I'm extremely talk-about-able.

MALIN: You have no idea.

TONI: I thought the two of you made it out, but I wasn't sure. Glad to see you're alive and kicking.

TED: You too. We heard you were still around.

MALIN: (To TONI.) Your vocabulary slipped.

TONI: I beg your pardon?

MALIN: You just stopped using ten dollar words.

TONI: Oh. Yeah. Well, I only ever talked like that when I was in costume, and I haven't suited up in a while, you know?

TED: You kept your costume?

TONI: Are you kidding? No way. I wasn't about to wind up as a smear on the wall if the Olympian ever came back.

MALIN: Did you have much trouble getting in here?

TONI: We ran into each other near the tunnel entrance under the railroad bridge. We couldn't actually get to it, though. Zombie City.

BILLY: We fought our way through downtown and came in through the subway entrance.

TONI: Mostly, we snuck our way through downtown.

BILLY: Hey, I took out three zombies on the way here. Give me some credit.

TED: How'd you do it?

BILLY: Baseball bat. It's low-tech, but hey, whatever works.

TED: Where is it?

BILLY: I dropped it climbing over a fence.

TED: Of course you did.

BILLY: Look, North, spare me your attitude. I was trying to stay alive, okay? You think you can climb a wire fence with a baseball bat in your hands any better than me, you can go right out and do it. Otherwise, just shut up!

TED: You could've thrown the bat over the fence before you started climbing.

BILLY: I was being chased by zombies! I wasn't thinking real clear, all right?

TED: Do you ever think clear?

MALIN: Ted, please.

BILLY: Y'know, North, some things don't change. You're as much of a jerk as you ever were.

TONI: So. Um. Is anyone else here?

MALIN: Hedgehog.

TONI: That's all?

MALIN: Yeah.

TONI: That's...unfortunate. I mean, don't get me wrong. I always liked the guy. I'm glad he's still alive. But I was hoping some more of our heavy hitters might be here, you know?

TED: Doctor Void and Crimson Crusher are dead. Void could build anything, and Crusher was the strongest one of us. There go our two biggest guns right there.

TONI: Guilty Man?

TED: He was a psycho who didn't even have any powers. No way was he one of our big guns.

TONI: He was more dangerous and unpredictable than any of us. We could use him now.

TED: Against anybody remotely sane, he was dangerous and unpredictable. Against mindless, flesh-eating zombies, I'm not so sure.

TONI: Do you guys know anything about Thump?

MALIN: No. You?

TONI: No. But if she's alive, I'd love to see her show up.

BILLY: That chick had some serious anger management issues. Even for a super villain.

TONI: Yeah, but those mental force bolt things of hers would work great against the zombies.

TED: And they were actual powers.

TONI: Monstro?

TED: If Monstro was alive, I think we'd have heard about it.

TONI: Yeah. Guess so. Shame. He wasn't in Crimson Crusher's league, but he was good in a fight. What about Mindpusher?

TED: I have no idea.

TONI: Was he here?

TED: We were all here.

MALIN: There were a bunch of us here, but it's not like we ever took a roll call. I mean, this was an informal organization of criminals. None of us were that reliable.

TONI: Y'know, I'm surprised this group worked as well as it did. For the personalities involved, and for the general social dysfunctionality of some of the members, this was a remarkably stable environment.

BILLY: Where else were we gonna go? It's not like we lived normal lives. Heck, I don't think any of us wanted normal lives. We wanted to hang out with people like us.

TONI: People with the same goals and ideals...subversion of authority...rapid accumulation of wealth...world domination...

BILLY: I just wanted to hit people.

TED: If you just wanted to hit people, what were you doing with sonic staple guns?

BILLY: Soften 'em up so they couldn't hit back.

TED: Point taken.

BILLY: You and South, you always had each other, but the rest of us, this was the only place we could go and really feel at home.

TED and MALIN look at each other awkwardly.

TONI: Y'know...when Void brought us all together, I wonder if he realized the social implications a group like this would have for its members?

MALIN: I dunno. He called this place a sanctuary. I always took that to mean physical safety, but maybe he meant for it to be a refuge from the outside world in more ways than one.

TED: He was never that gushy or sentimental.

MALIN: Not openly, no. But this place had a game room, for crying out loud! If he didn't mean for us to hang out and bond, why'd he put it there?

TED: That always seemed weird to me. I mean, seriously...a game room in a super villain stronghold?

BILLY: I figured the game room was there to keep us from killing each other.

TED: That room started more fights than it stopped. Most of us were terrible losers. I know I was. I remember Crimson Crusher threw a sofa through the wall into the kitchen that one time when Jeffrey beat him at “Space Invaders.” And y’know, something else I always wondered...who stocked the kitchen? There was always food here. There were always drinks. Who went out and did the grocery shopping? Who paid for all this stuff?

BILLY: Hah! That’s a good one, North.

TED: What is?

BILLY: Who *paid* for this stuff.

TED: I hate to break this to you, but not all of us stole absolutely everything all the time.

TONI: What’s the point of accumulating vast amounts of ill-gotten wealth if you’re not going to spend it?

BILLY: Look, I had my own place—I still do. It’s an apartment. It’s cruddy, but I pay rent for it. I pay for my utilities the same as everybody else. And I will shamefully admit that after we were forced to quit, I went out and got a job. And I pay taxes. And it sucks, but that’s the way it had to be. But here? This was a super villain hideout. The city had no idea this was here. I don’t know where the water came from, but I can guarantee they weren’t sending Doctor Void utility bills. You seriously think the food, and the pool table, the lockers, the sinks, the toilets, and all that stuff...that it was bought legit?

TED: Do you know how much food we went through here? Crimson Crusher alone ate something like two dozen hot dogs a day. And Murray and Tech Bomb were almost as bad. That's a lot of groceries to shoplift. If Void was ripping off every food delivery truck that passed through the area, it would've drawn attention. Same goes for extorting the local merchants for soft drinks and candy bars instead of money. Somebody went out and bought this stuff and brought it here. And...and...you mentioned the toilets. Do you think any remotely self-respecting super villain in their right mind would go out and steal *toilets*? They'd be a total joke if word ever got out! And how would you do something like that? Pull a U-Haul up to the loading dock at Home Depot (*Update reference as necessary.*), go up to the manager and say, "Your toilets or your life!?" Have you ever even tried to lift a toilet? *Have you?*

BILLY: Uh, no.

TED: Well, they're heavy! (*Beat.*) Who did the dishes? It's not like we could hire a maid service to come down here and clean. Who did this stuff?

MALIN: I always figured it was Doctor Void's minions.

TED: Stapler, you started out as one of Void's minions. Did he ever order you to clean house?

BILLY: No.

TED: Exactly. You know what Void's minions were like—thugs and ex-cons. Not the type of people who were going to dust and do dishes.

BILLY: Void built robots.

TED: And they were equipped with flame throwers and machine guns and lasers. Did you ever once see one of them cleaning the toilets?

BILLY: No.

TED: And another thing...while I agree that there's no way anybody paid property taxes on this place, I guarantee somebody paid property taxes on the empty warehouse that sits up above it, and that Void or whoever built this place owned that warehouse.

MALIN: And all of this matters why, exactly? There are zombies outside. What difference does it make who did the shopping or the cleaning or paid the bills nine years ago?

TED: It doesn't. It just...now that I'm thinking about it, it doesn't make sense. Void was a mad scientist. He was too focused on big lasers and nanotech to have had the patience or the finesse to set up something like this. And...tell me this...whatever your favorite type of potato chip is...did we have it here?

MALIN: Actually...yeah.

TONI: Now that you mention it.

BILLY: Uh-huh.

TED: Mine too. Somebody was paying attention to what we liked. Somebody wanted us to be happy. Void...I just...no...Void didn't have that in him.

BILLY laughs.

MALIN: Now what?

BILLY: He just said Void didn't have that in him.

MALIN: Yeah. So?

BILLY: Voids are empty. Of course they don't have anything in them.

MALIN: Okay. Yeah. You're right. But it's not that funny.

BILLY: But "void" also means to go to the bathroom. Doctor Void. *(Laughing so hard HE is gasping for air.)* No wonder this place had all those toilets. *(Still laughing.)* I can't believe I never thought of that before now.

MALIN: Nine years ago, that might actually have been funny.

TONI: At least until Void heard you and melted your internal organs.

MALIN: Doctor Void's remains are lying right over there. Show a little respect, okay?

BILLY: Yeah. Okay. Sorry. *(Composes himself, then starts laughing again.)* Doctor Void!

MARK enters, carrying a staple gun.

TONI: You must be Harrowing Hedgehog.

MARK: It's Mark now, but yeah—that would be me.

BILLY: Dude! Long time no see!

MARK: Let me guess...Black Librarian and Sonic Stapler.

BILLY: Right on.

TONI: My real name's Toni.

BILLY: Mine's Billy, for whatever it's worth. Although I gotta say, it's nice to be called Sonic Stapler again.

MARK: Yeah. Call me Hedgehog if you want.

TED: I think we prefer sticking with Ted and Malin, thanks.

TONI: That what you want, Malin?

MALIN: Yeah.

TONI: Hmph.

TED: What?

TONI: Nothing.

MARK: Stapler, I'm glad you're here. This belongs to you. (*Hands BILLY the staple gun.*)

BILLY: Whoa. This is...this is my spare gun. I thought I'd lost this. Where'd you find it?

MARK: In your locker.

BILLY: My locker? Really? Weird.

MARK: I found it buried under a pile of magazines and comic books and...why did you have empty Cheetos bags in there? (*Update reference as necessary.*)

BILLY: I think I was gonna cut the UPC labels off to mail away for something.

MARK: Couldn't you have stashed them at home?

BILLY: This was home, man. I mean, I had my apartment, but...I never went there. Not when I could be here.

MARK: Oh. (*Smiles a little.*) Okay.

MALIN: Is that a *sonic* staple gun?

BILLY: Yeah.

MALIN: Does it still work?

BILLY: Let me see. (*BILLY points the gun at some object on the stage and "fires". Whatever HE aims at should be rigged to fall over or fly across the stage. If possible, this should be accompanied by a sound effect for the gun.*) Yeah. It works.

MALIN: We have a weapon.

TED: It's a *staple gun*.

MARK: It's a start.

MALIN: (*To MARK.*) Did you find your spare costume?

MARK: Yeah. I did. It was—I can't wear it.

MALIN: Did it get ripped apart?

MARK: It was covered with blood.

MALIN: Oh. Do you know whose?

MARK: Microwave Man's.

BILLY: Crap. I always liked him.

TONI: And he had actual powers, too.

BILLY: Do any of you guys know what happened to the Olympian? I mean, after the massacre here, he just disappeared.

TONI: I have no idea. I sort of imagined him going off to live on some mountain or something, scanning the world with his super vision and super hearing, waiting for us to pop up so he could come back and finish the job.

MARK: I dunno about the mountain part, but yeah...I've always thought he was out there somewhere, waiting. Keeping a low profile...trying to lull us into a false sense of security.

MALIN: You ever think he could have left the planet, or the others locked him up or something after what he did?

TED: He could have left the planet, I guess. But locking him up, no way. Nothing could hold him, and nobody could have taken him down in the state he was in.

BILLY: Anybody know what was up with that? Why he went off the deep end?

MARK: Well, the media never acknowledged that he went crazy...only that he disappeared.

TONI: There've been plenty of conspiracy theories about that, but nobody knows anything, not really. The only idea that ever gained traction was that it had something to do with the bus explosion.

MALIN: Which was why we were all here that day. To make sure it wasn't one of us who blew up the bus. We didn't have much in the way of rules, but deliberate mass murder was strictly off-limits. We were super villains, not terrorists.

TONI: I always thought that was a pretty hazy distinction. I mean, how many times did we destroy federal property?

MALIN: Look, I never much cared about society and law and most people's ideas of right and wrong. I did as I pleased and took what I wanted and as long as nobody could stop me, then that was my right. But I never went out and killed anyone for the sake of an idea. The villain gig was about living our lives on our own terms and spitting in the face of anybody who got in our way. It was never about killing people to make a point. It was never about religion or ideology. There was always a line. And we all knew it.

TED: Maybe. But I think Guilty Man could've been responsible for that bus.

MALIN: Olympian busted in here before we got a chance to find out.

TONI: You think Guilty Man destroyed that bus, and Olympian had a wife or a girlfriend or kid or something on it?

TED: And he went ballistic and came here.

TONI: How'd he know who did it?

TED: Oh, come on! This is the Guilty Man we're talking about! If ever there was somebody who wanted credit for the stuff he pulled, it was him. He called himself the Guilty Man, for crying out loud! He left clues at crime scenes—on purpose! Who in their right mind does that?

MARK: And how'd Olympian find out where we were? This place was well-hidden.

TED: I dunno.

MONSTRO enters. HE is monstrous or animalistic in appearance and dressed in dirty, ragged clothing. HE seems disconnected and looks slowly around the group and the room without saying anything.

BILLY: (*Pointing at MONSTRO.*) Guys!

TONI: Holy cow.

MARK: Monstro!

MALIN: We thought you were dead.

TED: Where have you been?

MALIN: You know who we are—right? Without the costumes? I'm Malin—I was South. This is Ted—

MONSTRO: I know you. I know you all. By smell. (*Pause.*) I'm sorry. I haven't spoken...in years.

MARK: Years?

TONI: What, did you go hide out in the woods and live in a cave?

MONSTRO: Yes. That is exactly what I did.

MARK: A cave?

MONSTRO: Yes.

BILLY: When you say a cave, you mean like, a hole in a rock cave?

MONSTRO: Yes.

BILLY: That must've sucked.

MONSTRO: I got used to it, after a while.

MARK: What'd you eat?

MONSTRO: Rabbits. Berries. Deer.

MALIN: You've been living like an animal for the past nine years?

MONSTRO: Why shouldn't I? I look more like an animal than a human.

BILLY: Maybe so, but—well, yeah, you *are* a majorly scary-looking freak, and there's no getting around that. But you started out as a normal dude (Or "*chick*".) before they did this to you. You still got a human dude's brain. I'm figuring that makes you pretty much human no matter how ugly you are.

MONSTRO: It was impossible to stay near people and remain hidden. I look like a beast. I went and lived with the beasts. What else could I have done?

Beat.

MARK: Probably not much. Sorry.

MONSTRO: Don't be. I deserved it.

BILLY: Oh, come on. Don't tell me you went and got all remorseful over the whole life of crime thing? The government used you as a lab rat, for crying out loud! And I don't care if they took thirty years off your sentence as part of the deal! Look at you—you got screwed! After that, you couldn't even walk down the street without people running and screaming. You couldn't have had a normal life even if you'd wanted one! If anybody here had a right to be mad at the world, it was you!

MONSTRO: All the damage I caused, all the pain I inflicted, every dirty, nasty thing I did to get back at the world...I'm glad I did it. No regrets. But running out the door while my...friends were dying...I've had a hard time living with that.

TED: We all have. But try not to beat yourself up over it too much. It was survival instinct. It was run or die. There was no other option.

MONSTRO: This was the only place I was accepted. And I knew—I knew while I was running through those tunnels with screams filling my ears—I knew I would never be accepted anywhere again. That I had no life to speak of ahead of me. That I would be better off fighting and dying and maybe buying a few seconds for someone else to escape. But I was too scared. I gave in to my instinct for survival. Like an animal. It seemed only fitting that I continue living like one.

MALIN: Why did you come back now?

MONSTRO: I felt it...smelled it...something in the wind. Something was happening. I came back to the city to find out what.

MARK: Why'd you come down here?

MONSTRO: Where else would I go?

TONI: Zombies give you much trouble?

MONSTRO: Outside the bakery. But obviously, I'm still alive. *(Beat.)* There's a beauty to them—the zombies. A simplicity. They don't judge. They weren't scared of me. It was almost as if they were welcoming me.

BILLY: Monstro, they were trying to eat you.

MONSTRO: Yes. They were. But still...they treated me just like they would've treated anyone else.

BILLY: How come you didn't just let them chow down on you, then?

MONSTRO: Once I decided to return here, it was something I *needed* to do. I don't know how else to put it.

MARK: And now that you're here?

MONSTRO: I look at you...I look at this place...and all I feel is shame. *(Beat.)* I have nothing else to say.

MONSTRO sits and bows his head. TONI, BILLY, TED, MALIN, and MARK all exchange mildly incredulous looks.

TONI: Well, that's just great.

MALIN: He can hear you.

TONI: Let him! We've got precious little in the way of muscle and he wants to be a basket case!

PATRICK HALEY and THUMP enter. PATRICK is dressed in normal clothing. THUMP's attire has a punk or goth flare. THEY are both amazed by the damage to the room.

PATRICK: Oh. Whoa.

THUMP: Wow.

BILLY: Patrick?

PATRICK: Billy? Is that you?

BILLY: Yeah. And a bunch of the others.

THUMP: No zombies here, right?

TED: Thump?

THUMP: Yeah.

TONI: Yes!

THUMP: What?

TONI: Nothing—just—

TED: We're really glad to see you.

THUMP: You gonna answer my freakin' question?

TED: What?

THUMP: No zombies here, right?

TED: No. No zombies.

THUMP: Why didn't you say so the first time? Jerk.

PATRICK: Oh man. Look at this place.

BILLY: Patrick—Tripod...what happened to you?

MALIN: Tripod?

MARK: But...you used to have three arms...

PATRICK: Used to. Yeah. And the extra one was really strong.

TONI: What...how...

PATRICK: Olympian. (*Beat.*) Hey...at least I don't have to wear huge coats to hide the extra limb anymore. Made going underground a lot easier.

THUMP: Doesn't make you any less useless in a fight.

BILLY: Dude lost his arm, Thump!

THUMP: Yeah? So?

PATRICK: Don't antagonize her, Billy. I was cornered by zombies in an alley when she showed up and saved my butt.

THUMP: If I'd known you weren't any good anymore, I wouldn't have bothered.

BILLY: Listen—

THUMP: What?

PATRICK: Billy, drop it.

BILLY and THUMP glower at each other.

Drop it.

BILLY breaks eye contact with THUMP. There is an uncomfortable moment of silence. THUMP looks at MONSTRO, who is still sitting with his head bowed.

THUMP: What's with him?

TONI: He's got issues.

THUMP: Don't we all?

TED: Tripod, what kept you from bleeding to death when you lost the arm?

PATRICK: Olympian cauterized the wound with his heat vision. I don't know if he was trying to torture me or keep me alive to play with me. I blacked out right around then.

TED: I bet you did.

PATRICK: Yeah. It kinda sucked.

THUMP: So. This turning into the hiding hole for former bad guys while the world falls apart?

BILLY: Looks that way.

THUMP: Great. That's just great. I turn tail and run from a perfectly good fight, then waste nine years hiding like a freakin' sissy, and now this. I should've let Olympian kill me and been done with it.

PATRICK: Who all we got here? You two must be North and South, right?

TED: Used to be.

PATRICK: Any kids now?

MALIN: We divorced.

THUMP: Figures.

PATRICK: Huh. Wouldn't have seen that coming with you guys. Sorry to hear it.

TED: Um, yeah. Listen, we just go by Ted and Malin now.

PATRICK: There's enough people here that I'm not gonna be able to keep everybody's regular names straight. Billy's the only one I ever hung out with without the masks. So let's just keep it simple and go with the old costume names, okay?

MALIN: Okay.

TED: You sure? I thought—

MALIN: He's right. We should keep it simple. Especially if we wind up having to fight those things outside. Costume names all around. Makes sense.

BILLY: Wish we still had our costumes. Funny how things work out, huh?

PATRICK: Who else we got?

MARK: Harrowing Hedgehog.

TONI: Black Librarian.

PATRICK: Any weapons here?

TED: We got a sonic staple gun.

PATRICK: How about the North and South suits?

TED: Long gone.

TONI: One sonic staple gun, Tripod. That's all we've got.

THUMP: So that's why you were so happy to see me. With Monstro pulling the shrinking violet routine, I'm the only one here with any kind of offensive powers that can be used against the zombies.

TONI: Hey, I'm glad you're alive, powers or not. But yeah. You're the closest thing to a glimmer of hope we've had come our way.

THUMP: What did you say?

TONI: Um...

THUMP: Say it!

TONI: (*Timidly.*) Glimmer of hope?

THUMP: That's what I thought. Listen, if you ever refer to me as a glimmer of hope again, I'm going to knock you through a wall! I'm not your hope. I'm not your salvation. I'm not anybody's freakin' hero. Don't you go pinning any expectations on me.

TONI: Wasn't trying to. Sorry.

THUMP: Yeah, you are.

PATRICK: It's bad out there. Are we gonna be able to stay holed up for a while if we have to?

MALIN: We don't have any food.

MARK: There's a little.

PATRICK and TED try to help BILLY.

PATRICK: This one's strong!

BILLY: Monstro! We could use some muscle!

TED takes the staple gun from BILLY's hand and shoots ATTACK ZOMBIE. ATTACK ZOMBIE lets go of BILLY and falls, but continues to move.

BILLY: Thanks.

TED: Here. I feel ridiculous holding this thing. *(Gives the staple gun to BILLY.)*

BILLY: Why?

TED: You figure it out.

ATTACK ZOMBIE drags itself towards THUMP.

ATTACK ZOMBIE: Meeatt...

THUMP: Oh, shut up.

THUMP points her arm at ATTACK ZOMBIE, who reacts as if hit by an invisible force, then lies still.

BILLY: *(Bitterly, to MONSTRO.)* Thanks for nothing, you useless, ugly piece of crap! I know you said you came here because you didn't have anywhere else to go, but with this guilt complex you've been whining about, I was hoping you might actually try to help!

Beat. MONSTRO doesn't budge.

I don't believe this.

MALIN: Stapler, look at him. He didn't come here to help. He came here to die.

BILLY: Whatever. *(To PATRICK, holding up the staple gun.)* You. I oughta use this on you. *(To THUMP.)* Both of you.

THUMP: Try it. I dare you.

PATRICK: We were careful!

BILLY: Not careful enough. If there'd been more of those things, you could've gotten us killed!

THUMP: I told you—we weren't followed.

BILLY: I'm thinking you're wrong.

THUMP: I'm thinking *you're* wrong.

TED: Stapler, this isn't helping.

BILLY: Up yours!

TED: That's real mature. Thanks.

BILLY: Do you have some kind of problem with me, man?

TED: I don't have the words for it.

BILLY: Try.

TED: Okay. Sonic Stapler. You call yourself Sonic freaking Stapler. Why in the world would anyone dress up in a black costume with a staple on the chest and call themselves Sonic Stapler?

BILLY: Because sonic staple guns were my weapons, you idiot!

TED: They were weapons you *asked for!* Doctor Void made them for you because you beat him in a card game! You were one of his henchmen until one of his grand schemes fell apart and you were able to get him stinking drunk and beat him at cards! So he agreed to make weapons for you, and what did you ask for? Staple guns!

BILLY: My brother shot me in the butt with a staple gun once when I was a kid! It freaking hurt and I never forgot it. So yeah—when I got the chance to have super-weapons of my own, I got staple guns.

TED: What sort of pathetic mind chooses their super villain weapon based on what happened to their butt when they were a kid?

BILLY: Dude, you and South only had careers as super villains because you stole those suits! You didn't build them yourselves. You didn't win them in a fight or even a card game. You didn't do anything to earn them! So get off my case!

TED: Of course we earned them! We stole them! They were ours by right of the fact that we were able to get them out of that facility and nobody was able to stop us! They were highly sophisticated military weapon prototypes! You had souped-up construction tools! What were you thinking?

BILLY: I just wanted to raise hell (Or "*cause trouble*".) and have fun. You?

TED: I set my goals a lot higher than that.

BILLY: How'd it turn out for you? (*TED doesn't answer.*) I had the five best years of my life playing bad guy. When other people were going out on Saturday night to watch movies about super heroes, I was fighting 'em. And most of the time I got my butt kicked. But you know what? It was still fun. I had it good and I knew it. And yeah, it all went down the toilet. But it was great while it lasted. I got no complaints. How about you? (*Again, TED doesn't answer.*) Then get off my back.

MALIN: Guys...zombies? Remember the zombies? We were trying to figure out the viability of hiding out here?

TONI: Nobody on Olympian's side ever went public about this place. I don't think anyone knows it's here.

BILLY: Except for everybody on the other team. Some of whom are now zombies.

PATRICK: He's right.

MARK: So I guess the question is...do the zombies have memories?

PATRICK: I dunno. (*Gestures in the direction of ATTACK ZOMBIE'S body.*) We could've asked him.

THUMP: Little late for that.

TONI: I haven't seen anything to suggest that they do. They mostly seem to be wandering around attacking whatever they see, but it's not as if we've had a conversation with one of them, either. (*Beat.*) Maybe we should try.

BILLY: Try what?

TONI: Talking to one.

TED: What the devil are you talking about?

TONI: Capture one. See if we can get it to talk.

PATRICK: Capture a zombie? And bring it here?

TONI: Yeah.

TED: Are you out of your mind?

TONI: I'm serious.

PATRICK: There's a hardware store near the subway entrance. We can break in and get some rope...maybe some crowbars and pipes to use as weapons.

MARK: Assuming the store hasn't been looted.

PATRICK: Assuming, yeah.

TONI: (*To PATRICK.*) So, you in?

PATRICK: Oh, yeah.

BILLY: I haven't done anything that crazy in nine years. Sounds like fun.

THUMP: Yeah. It kinda does.

MARK: I'll go, too.

TONI: Great.

TED: This isn't worth the risk...even if the zombies do have memories, they don't know we're here.

TONI: True. But the more I think about it, the more I think we need a better idea what we're up against in case we have to defend this place.

TED: You know what I think?

TONI: No, but I know you're going to tell me.

TED: I think being around each other is making you miss the old days. You all want to go out and fight something.

BILLY: Could be. All right, folks, let's go bag us a zombie.

MONSTRO: (*Finally lifting up his head.*) I want to go with you.

Pause.

BILLY: Have you finally decided you're gonna help?

MONSTRO: I don't know.

BILLY: Listen, you—

Beat. MONSTRO stares sadly at BILLY.

You've still gotta have a lot of anger inside. At the world. At yourself. At *somebody*. Whatever happens out there, try to make it count, okay?

Pause. MONSTRO doesn't say anything.

You should've been a mime instead of a super villain with all this silent crap.

BILLY exits in a huff. TONI, PATRICK, THUMP, MONSTRO and MARK begin to exit.

TED: Tripod.

PATRICK: Yeah?

TED: Make sure you secure that door on the way out.

PATRICK: Yeah.

MALIN: Be careful.

THUMP: Yes, mother.

MALIN: Seriously. Don't pick any fights you can't win. Don't try to help any civilians.

THUMP: What do you think we are...super heroes?

TONI, PATRICK, THUMP, MONSTRO and MARK exit.

MALIN: Monstro's going to get himself killed. Or worse.

TED: If the zombies get Monstro, it'll be up to Stapler or Thump to make sure he stays down. It's out of our hands. There's nothing we can do about it now.

MALIN: No. There isn't. But tell me something. And be honest. Didn't you want to go with them? Deep down, just a little?

TED: I'd be lying if I said no. But I just...it's been nine years. I've gotten that stuff out of my system. And yeah, I miss it a little bit. But it's not something that I need to do anymore. I don't have to prove myself. I've managed to get integrated into the system I used to fight against. I'm normal and I'm okay with it. And even if I did still have the burning urge to go out and fight zombies, I've got enough freakin' common sense to know that it's a bad, bad idea to do it with our suits long gone.

MALIN: I agree. One hundred percent. Except I think I miss it more than you.

TED: Sorry to hear it, but I'm glad you've at least got your head screwed on straight.

MALIN: Why? You're not my husband anymore. You don't have any say in my life.

TED: I don't have to be married to you to care, do I?

MALIN: I guess not.

TED: It's not like the marriage ended badly. It just ended.

MALIN: Do you ever think we should have tried harder?

TED: What, to keep it going?

MALIN: Yeah.

TED: No. I don't.

MALIN: How come?

TED: There was nothing left to save. We were two people living in the same house and we hardly ever spoke to each other. There was no animosity. There was no contempt. But there was no love, either.

MALIN: Was there ever love?

TED: Sure there was.

MALIN: Would you have loved me without my costume?

TED: That's kind of a loaded question. If not for the costumes, we'd never have hooked up in the first place.

MALIN: Okay...*could* you have loved me without my costume?

TED: Yeah. I could've loved you without the costume.

MALIN: So why'd you stop loving me when the costumes were gone?

TED: Because it wasn't the costumes. It was the mayhem. The costumes just made the mayhem easier. Mayhem was good for us. If you and me were peanut butter and jelly, then mayhem was the bread. If we could've hooked up without the costumes, whatever we did, there would've been mayhem. Maybe less property damage, but still mayhem. But when we gave up the costumes...we gave up the mayhem. We gave up the thrills. We couldn't do anything that might draw attention to ourselves. Because Olympian might've been out there somewhere. One step in the wrong direction and we'd have been dead. Olympian killed our marriage. You know that? He didn't kill us. But he killed our marriage.

MALIN: No. That's not right. We killed our marriage. We killed our marriage to keep him from killing us.

TED: Never thought of it like that. Yeah. I guess so.

MALIN: Was it worth it?

TED: We're alive.

MALIN: Is that all that matters to you? To be alive?

TED: It beats the alternative.

MALIN: Do you have any regrets?

TED: In order to have any regrets, I'd have needed the option of doing something differently. There were no options. So no.

MALIN: I have one regret.

TED: What?

MALIN: The divorce.

TED: Malin. Please. We shouldn't do this. Especially not now.

MALIN: We didn't have to divorce, Ted. That was a choice. We could've stayed together.

TED: We were two shadows of our former selves going through the motions of day to day life. We were both depressed and feeding each other's depression. We weren't good for each other anymore.

MALIN: And after we called it quits, did things get any better for you?

TED: Eventually.

MALIN: How long is eventually?

TED: Years. Three or four.

MALIN: That's a long time.

TED: Yeah. It is.

MALIN: Do you think, if we'd stayed together, that after three or four years, things might have gotten better on their own?

TED: I don't know. That's not how things worked out. I don't see any point dwelling on it.

MALIN: You realize you're saying it like you had no control over it. "That's not how things worked out." Like it was completely out of your hands.

TED: It was. There were no options.

MALIN: Bull. We could've tried harder.

TED: There was no point in trying harder.

MALIN: You know what I think? When Olympian was in this room and people were dying around us, you realized that you were in a situation where you couldn't win and you just gave up. For most of us, retiring and going into hiding amounted to a strategic retreat, but for you, it was just giving up. You hated to lose. You caused half the fights in that game room, for crying out loud. And when you finally saw yourself in a real-life, no-win situation with lifelong ramifications, you just gave up!

TED: Yeah! Because it was a lifelong no-win situation!

MALIN: That doesn't mean you stop trying!

TED: I am not a super hero!

MALIN: I never wanted a super hero! I wanted a husband! I wanted somebody who would stick by me through the “for worse” part and you didn’t do it! You coward! You gave up on me! You gave up on our marriage!

TED: It was a mutual decision! You went along with it!

MALIN: Because it was what you wanted and I was tired and I was weak and I was scared, and I trusted you and I loved you so I went along with it. And I have regretted it every day since!

TED: I’m sorry. I didn’t see any other way...

MALIN: There you go again not taking responsibility! Damn it, Ted! (“Damn it, Ted!” may be omitted.) Be a man! Be the man I fell in love with!

TED: I’m not him anymore. He died in this room nine years ago.

MALIN: No. I refuse to believe that. The man I love...he’s still in you.

TED: That sounds like a song lyric.

MALIN: Be serious.

TED: I am serious. You’re the one with the fantasies.

TONI enters. SHE is carrying a hammer, crowbar, or section of metal pipe.

MALIN: Toni!

TED: Are you okay?

TONI: Yeah. Just rattled, mostly. No bites.

TED: Where are the others?

TONI: Monstro’s gone. He just walked right into a crowd of those things and they swarmed all over him. He didn’t even try to fight back.

MALIN: Just like that?

TONI: Just like that.

TED: Did Stapler or Thump—

TONI: They couldn’t get to him. It was like he vanished under a wave.

MALIN: So Monstro’s a zombie now?

TONI: Depends on how much is left of him. Probably not. But I dunno.

TED: Let’s hope. What else?

TONI: We ran into Untouchable.

TED: Jeffrey's on his way here?

TONI: Last I saw.

TED: Where is he? Where's everybody else?

TONI: Still fighting, I guess.

MALIN: If they're still fighting, what are you doing here?

TONI: Going out was a risk, Malin. I thought it was an acceptable risk, and I was wrong. So I got my butt outta there.

MALIN: You just abandoned the others?

TONI: I have enough sense to recognize a losing battle. So I left. It's not like I was gonna announce it and draw attention to myself while the others were doing such a great job of keeping the zombies occupied.

MALIN: They went out there because of you! You wanted to interrogate a zombie so they went to capture one!

TONI: Monstro went because he had a death wish and we all knew there was no point in trying to stop him! Everybody else went because they hadn't punched anything in nine years. To them, bagging a zombie was just an excuse to go out and start a fight! And what're you getting on my case for? You stayed here! You didn't even go with us to try to help!

TED: Because we knew it was a bad idea! And we let that be known.

MALIN: Everybody knew we weren't going to be there for support, and nobody had any delusions about Monstro, but they were counting on you!

TONI: Counting on me? Listen Malin, in case you were *never* paying attention, we were all super villains here! Villains! You know—bad guys. By definition, we are not trustworthy people. I thought that part was always out in the open. Get over yourself!

TED: You were never a real super villain! You were just some schmuck with a mask and an internet connection!

TONI: I was a costumed criminal mastermind! I pulled off heists no run-of-the-mill crook would ever dream of!

TED: You stole used books!

TONI: I stole valuable used books! One-of-a-kind artifacts full of secret knowledge! And comics that were worth a fortune!

TED: Wow. Listen to you. You know, for all the crap I gave Sonic Stapler about his name, yours was actually worse. I mean...*Black Librarian*? Why? What possessed you?

TONI: I was a librarian and I dressed in black. It made perfect sense!

TED: And the way you talked! That over-the-top vocabulary! Do you know we spent hours making fun of you behind your back?

TONI: Of course I know! That was the whole idea! I didn't have a lot going for me in the raw power department, so I figured if everybody—the good guys and the bad guys—all thought I was some kind of mostly harmless criminal nerd—then you'd underestimate me and I'd have that working to my advantage. I'm convinced Mark was pulling the same shtick—there's no way he could've really been that dumb. Now Billy—Billy's just a thug. Not too bright. And I gotta agree with you about the staple gun thing. But he was usually good in a fight.

MALIN: (*Incredulous.*) I don't believe you.

TONI: What part don't you believe?

MALIN: You abandoned them!

TONI: Oh, come on! Are you still stuck on that?

MALIN: Yes!

TONI: I seem to recall that the last time either of you was in a fight, you ran away while your friends died. So do me a favor and stop judging me, okay? Because neither one of you is qualified.

BILLY, PATRICK, MARK, and JEFFREY enter. THEY show visible signs of having been in a fight. JEFFREY is cradling an injured arm. BILLY and PATRICK are dragging INTERROGATION ZOMBIE, who is gagged and bound in ropes. PATRICK and MARK are carrying crowbars, hammers, or sections of metal pipe. MARK goes to his bag and pulls out a scarf or piece of fabric and ties JEFFREY's arm in a sling during the following conversation.

BILLY: Toni, what the devil happened to you?

TONI: You got one!

BILLY: Yeah, we got one—but we just lost Thump! Thump and Monstro both! Monstro didn't even try to fight back!

MALIN: Thump? How?

BILLY: She was holding ‘em off for the rest of us to get away, but there were too many. She put up a hell (Or “heck”.) of a fight. And she made sure they wouldn’t turn her into one of them—she used her powers on herself. Took a mess of ‘em with her. Went out with style. (*Chokingly.*) Nasty little punk put Monstro to shame.

PATRICK: Toni, where’d you go?

TONI: I was in serious danger of getting my brains eaten, so I ran for it.

BILLY: You ran?

Pause. BILLY punches TONI. If BILLY is cast as male and TONI is cast as female [remember, both parts are gender flexible], the punch may be omitted at the director’s discretion.

TONI: Sorry.

PATRICK: Yeah, you are.

MARK: Tripod, when you said earlier that Thump saved you in the alley...and she said she wouldn’t have done it if she’d known you’d lost your arm...how’d she know it was you without your costume?

PATRICK: There’s no way she could have.

MARK: That’s what I thought.

TED: Jeffrey, I wish the circumstances were different, but it’s good to see you.

JEFFREY: You too, Ted.

TED: You hurt?

JEFFREY: Broken arm, I think.

TED: In a zombie fight?

JEFFREY: Arthropod. He’s undead, but he’s still got some muscle.

TED: Anybody bite you?

JEFFREY: No. No bites. Just the arm. (*To TED and MALIN.*) You guys decided to stay in, huh? Smart move.

MARK: We shouldn’t have done that. That was beyond stupid. It’s a nightmare out there. It’s Hell on Earth. (*Last sentence may be omitted.*)

JEFFREY: Thousands of zombies. Maybe millions.

MARK: And they’ve zombified more super heroes.

MALIN: Who?

MARK: Lava Man. Electroid. The Light Sisters. Red Flame.

MALIN: Red Flame?

TED: They got Red Flame? That's bad. He's probably the most powerful super guy next to Olympian. If he's been turned into a zombie...this just got a whole lot worse.

PATRICK: Yeah, well, I got more bad news. The subway door was closed tight. I didn't leave it open.

TED: So we've got an open door somewhere that they can just find their way in?

PATRICK: Looks like it.

JEFFREY: How many other entrances are there?

TED: Too many.

PATRICK: Do we even know where they all are?

MARK: I do. I'll go check 'em.

PATRICK: How would you know?

MARK: I just do, okay? There's no time to discuss it. (*Exits.*)

TONI: (*To TED.*) Told ya.

BILLY: Hey, guys. We got us a zombie here. What do you want to do with him?

TONI: Are there any chairs that are still in one piece?

MALIN: Maybe. (*Grabbing a chair from the debris.*) Yeah. Here.

TONI: Tie him to that.

PATRICK and BILLY sit INTERROGATION ZOMBIE in the chair and tie HIM to it.

How'd you manage to rope him up with the zombie mob trying to kill everybody?

PATRICK: I kicked him into Arthropod, who tossed him through a department store window. We followed, knocked him down an escalator, and that gave us enough distance from the mob. Then we headed for the subway.

TED: Did they follow you?

PATRICK: They tried. That was when we lost Thump.

TONI: Okay, you guys ready? The gag's coming off.

TONI removes the gag from INTERROGATION ZOMBIE.

INTERROGATION ZOMBIE: Eeeeat youuu...

TONI: What's your name?

INTERROGATION ZOMBIE: Eeeeat youuu...

TONI: Yeah. We got that part. Do you remember your name?

INTERROGATION ZOMBIE: Suckkk yourrr brainsss...

TONI: Who. Were. You?

INTERROGATION ZOMBIE: Innstessstines gooooddd....

TONI: Where were you born?

INTERROGATION ZOMBIE: Chewww yourrr tongue...

BILLY: I'm thinking this is kind of pointless. Let's blow his head off.

PATRICK: He doesn't remember anything.

JEFFREY: He knows what brains and intestines are.

TONI: I don't think he could tell you the actual function of either. He just thinks they're food.

INTERROGATION ZOMBIE: Wanttt eyeball innn mouuuthhh...

TED: He knows he's compelled to eat people.

TONI: Oh, definitely.

MALIN: And he remembers what people parts are.

TONI: Obviously.

INTERROGATION ZOMBIE: Eeeattt...

BILLY: Will you shut up?

TED: So is it just a selective memory, or is he so obsessed with eating that it's the only thing he can focus on?

TONI: What, you think his full memory could still be intact, but he's incapable of actively thinking about anything other than eating?

TED: Maybe.

MALIN: So if that were true...for all practical purposes, that'd be the same as having no memory.

INTERROGATION ZOMBIE: Untie meee sooo l eaaattt youuu...

TONI: Unless the memory somehow serves the purpose of obtaining food.

MALIN: That was really creepy.

TED: He's aware that he's tied up.

TONI: But maybe only because it's keeping him from eating.

BILLY: Can I shoot him and see what happens?

TONI: No.

TED: Okay. So he can focus on what's in front of him. Is he capable of any kind of higher reasoning? Can he think?

MALIN: How would we even find that out?

TONI: If you tell me the sum of nine plus the square root of twenty-five, you can eat North's brains.

INTERROGATION ZOMBIE: Fourrrrteeeeen.

TONI: Yes, he can think.

TED: Thanks so much.

TONI: Don't mention it.

MALIN: How about memory?

TED: If you can tell us the capital of Nebraska, you can eat Black Librarian's liver.

INTERROGATION ZOMBIE: Don'ttt knowwww...

TONI: What kind of a question is that? Half the people in the country couldn't tell you the capital of most of the states.

INTERROGATION ZOMBIE: Waaant brainssss...

TED: Would you like to ask him about the history of the Academy Awards?

TONI: We're not playing "Quiz the Zombie," Ted. Keep it simple. Offer him a liver and ask him his name.

INTERROGATION ZOMBIE: ...nowwww!

INTERROGATION ZOMBIE rocks or scoots its chair in TED's direction and tries to bite TED. BILLY shoots INTERROGATION ZOMBIE with his staple gun. INTERROGATION ZOMBIE slumps over in its chair, officially dead.

TONI: What'd you go and do that for?

BILLY: He tried to bite North!

TONI: He was tied up!

BILLY: He was moving the chair!

TONI: We went to all that trouble to get this thing—

BILLY: We?

TONI: You did the work. I did the thinking. So yeah. "We." But now our zombie is *dead* dead and we still don't know the extent of their memories!

BILLY: I'll let him kill you both next time, okay?

TONI: I'll take my chances.

Pause. Everyone stares at INTERROGATION ZOMBIE.

MALIN: So what do we do with a dead zombie in a chair?

BILLY: (*Pointing at ATTACK ZOMBIE.*) Don't forget, we got another one over here.

MALIN: That's what that smell is, isn't it?

TED: Pretty sure it is.

MALIN: Decaying zombie stench. Hooray.

TONI: How about we move these guys to another room?

PATRICK: Which room?

TONI: Any room that's not this room.

TED: Locker room, then.

TED and PATRICK drag ATTACK ZOMBIE offstage and immediately return.

BILLY: Should we bother taking this one out of the chair?

JEFFREY: Did you plan on sitting here?

BILLY: The chair's got zombie parts splattered all over it.

JEFFREY: Again, did you plan on sitting here?

BILLY: No way!

JEFFREY: Then leave him on the chair.

MALIN: C'mon, Stapler. Let's get this guy out of here.

MALIN and BILLY drag INTERROGATION ZOMBIE offstage and immediately return.

TED: That was disgusting.

JEFFREY: You should've been outside with us.

PATRICK: Can anybody tell me why there's a big pile of Cheetos bags on the floor in there?

TED: They were Billy's.

PATRICK: Say no more.

MARK enters.

Hedgehog. Did you find the open door?

MARK: Yeah.

PATRICK: Which one was it?

MARK: The one near the bank.

PATRICK: So who left it open? Who used the bank entrance?

Somebody fess up.

MARK: I didn't come in that way.

TED: I used the bakery entrance.

TONI: I came in through the Subway.

BILLY: I was with Toni.

MALIN: Subway.

PATRICK: Subway.

JEFFREY: Subway with you guys. What about Monstro?

MALIN: He said he used the bakery.

PATRICK: So who was it?

MALIN: Wait a minute.

TED: What?

MALIN: I need to see something.

MALIN exits to the locker room.

BILLY: What's she looking for?

MALIN enters.

MALIN: It was Airborne.

PATRICK: What?

MALIN: The zombie that wandered in here...it's got a tattoo...a really bad tattoo...of a winged skull on its right shoulder. It was Airborne.

PATRICK: Airborne...

MALIN: That zombie used to be one of us. And it remembered how to get in.

BILLY: But why would he? Airborne didn't know we were here.

MALIN: All of us came here. Maybe he instinctively knew he'd find food.

MARK: So the heroes that've been turned into zombies...they can remember where this place is.

PATRICK: That doesn't mean they'll come here. They don't know we're hiding here, remember?

TONI: But Monstro does. And if he's been turned into a zombie, he's gonna come back.

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