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Hero: The Musical

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Act I, Scene 1

The stage is dark for only a moment. Then, a scattering of lights come up to reveal our mains, DANNY NEWMAN and SAMANTHA TURNER, slowly walking onstage, suitcases in hand.

DANNY

Wow, Cityville. Huge metropolis, huh Sam?

SAM

Yeah. And we're going to university right in the middle of it, Danny!

DANNY

(Looking around above him)

It's very...dark, don't ya think?

SAM

(punching him on the arm)

We're still not out of the subway, dork.

DANNY

(with a cheesy grin)

I know that!

SAM

(Gesturing toward the "door")

Well, shall we?

DANNY

(Stepping forward)

Let's go see the big city!

The two walk forward, and the dark drop lifts while all lights come up to reveal the giant metropolis that is CITYVILLE. Most of the FULL COMPANY mills about in various day-to-day activities. As Danny and Sam run to and fro to explore the city, our opening number begins.

*****OPENING*****

****During the opening number, Sam and Danny are whisked off into life in Cityville, with a mid-number montage of time passing as they get used to life in the big city. We also are introduced to the heroes of Cityville, including the ULTRAS and their leader, the flashy WIZARD, as well as the underground VIGILANTES****

After the number concludes, a loud thunderclap suddenly rocks the set. All of the denizens panic and begin to run about in search of shelter. Rain starts to pour down, and a cackle emanates from all corners of the stage. A figure walks confidently on stage, though as people run by him obliviously, it becomes clear only the audience can see or hear him for now. Complete with a swirling cape, this is our flashy, flamboyant narrator: MR. Z.

MR. Z

(He turns to face the audience, speaking with a booming, theatrical tone)

Goooooooood evening Cityville! Looks like quite a nasty storm is brewing. But to all you unbeknowing nellies, something else is brewing too. The story of a hero, and not just any hero, but a great one! Of course, I know all the big budget studios advertise that now, but still, this guy is truly--oh!

He steps aside as Danny and Sam run by.

SAM

I think my place is this way!

DANNY

Well then I'll leave you to it.

SAM

You get somewhere dry too Danny! I'll see you around!

She rushes off, pulling out an umbrella. As Danny fumbles with his own things, someone bumps into him, knocking him off balance and sending a watch flying into the street.

DANNY

Hey!

(He quickly switches mindsets and starts looking for the watch as it begins to pour down rain)

That was my grandfather's watch. Ah, c'mon, I can't lose it now!

As he's searching frantically, Mr. Z walks back center.

MR. Z

Ah, Danny boy. If only you knew what was coming your way.

(Addressing the audience again)

You see, hours ago, a meteor shower has just bathed Earth's atmosphere with cosmic radiation. The storm that is brewing here is about to release a bolt of lightning containing that energy, which will hit--right next to Danny!

(Deadpan)

What, you thought it would strike him directly? Do you know the odds of that? C'mon, be real here.

The loudest thunder yet rumbles. Danny, still searching for his watch, looks up in alarm. Then, he sees it. He lunges forward and grabs it.

DANNY

Aha, gotcha--

A blinding flash of lightning, followed by a loud clap of thunder, fills the stage. As sound returns, the first thing we hear is Mr. Z laughing again.

MR. Z

Hahaha! And so it begins, folks! All stories start with one step! And now all our hero needs to do

(walking over to Danny and crouching down)

is WAKE UP.

He gleefully runs away as Danny bolts upright. The latter looks around wildly, slowly getting to his feet.

DANNY

(Shaking his head)

Jeez, that almost hit me!

(Looking at his watch in concern)

Heyyy, at least this little guy still works, right? Just twist
the knob and--

*THE MOMENT WHERE EVERYTHING CHANGES: As Danny twists the knob on
the watch, everything freezes except for him. The stage is
silent. He slowly glances around, then more frantically.*

DANNY

What on Earth?

(He looks back down to the watch in puzzlement)

Did I just--

*He twists the knob back, unfreezing everything. In his stupor,
Danny has walked in front of a passing BUSINESSMAN, who bowls
him over.*

BUSINESSMAN

Watch it, kid!

*Danny clamors to his feet, gripping his watch. Time freezes
again.*

DANNY

You w--whoa!

(He begins to wander around the cityscape, now frozen in time)

This is really weird.

(He looks at his watch again)

Did I do this?

*He clicks the button again and time unfreezes. As normal life
unknowingly resumes around Danny, the young man plops down on a
set of apartment steps, the rain still coming down. The street
slowly clears out.*

DANNY

Oh my god, what do I do? What even is this? What does it mean?

(He inhales slowly)

Deep breaths, Newman. Pull yourself together. You're good at
getting through things, right? This isn't any different.

He stands, slowly.

Baby Steps

Danny: Feel that?

There's a change
I can't quite put my finger on what it is yet
But I know
I'll figure things out
'Cause when it comes to that there's something I never forget

Baby steps
You start out small, so it's not that hard
Baby steps
Don't feel like much yet, but soon you're goin' far
Baby steps
And then at the end, you've figured it out
But that'll take time, so rely on for now
Those baby steps

I've done it before
A small town boy all of my life
But look at me now
Up in the city living the high life!
I took my time, felt my way 'round the place
And even if I didn't feel it, I wore a smile of confidence on my face!

Baby steps
I found my way, it wasn't that hard
Baby steps
I've always wanted to be the one who goes far
Baby steps
So I learned and I figured things out
I'll get by by myself, that's what I'm all about!

Danny begins to swagger downstage, gaining confidence.

And now I've got this new challenge facing me
It would be easy to give up or back down
But I'm not the sort, I may be tougher than I seem
I'll take this one too, no you'll never see me frown

He begins to mimic a slow tightrope walk with his arms stretched out, periodically freezing and unfreezing time to the beat.

It just takes one step in front of the other
And it just takes one step in time
It just takes one step in front of the other
And soon you're marching 'cross the finish line!

It just takes one step in front of the other
And it just takes one step in time
It just takes one step in front of the other
Then another, then another, then another--
Now ya got it!

Now he breaks into dance, rapidly gaining a hold on his newfound powers. The rain begins to let up.

And it just takes, it just takes, just takes one step
And it just takes, it just takes, just takes one step
And it just takes, it just takes, just takes one step
It just takes, it just takes, just takes those

Baby steps!
Started small, wasn't that hard
Baby steps
Didn't seem like much but now you're goin' far
Baby steps
And now you're beginning to figure things out
You found your way around, with those

Baby steps!

He finishes the number with a series of taps, sticking an ending triumphantly as the lights go down.

Act I, Scene 2

The lights come up as we see Danny and Sam strolling down the street. The latter is very talking animatedly while Danny listens.

DANNY

I'm so glad you got the internship, Sam.

SAM

Thanks! And ya know what the best part about being a journalist in training in Cityville is?

DANNY

The tunnel evacuation system in case aliens decide to invade for a sixth time?

SAM

No, the heroes! They told us to just go up to any we can find and ask them as many questions about themselves as possible!

DANNY

That doesn't sound safe...or legal.

A sudden commotion draws their attention. A crowd has gathered around the Ultras, who appear to be celebrating their latest victory.

SAM

Oh my god, the Ultras! I gotta see if I can ask them a question!

She runs off. Danny watches her go, though he begins to notice a LADY outside the crowd, gesturing to a slinking THIEF.

LADY

Help, help! He took my bag!

Danny looks back and forth at the two sets of commotion, the celebrating townsfolk drowning out the second.

WIZARD

After-party in Ultra Tower, fellas!

Everyone begins to follow the team offstage. Danny sighs.

DANNY

Seriously?

He looks down at his watch, pondering an idea that has just occurred to him. Slowly, he looks back up at the thief, then resolutely marches over to him and turns the knob on the watch.

DANNY

(Nabbing the bag)

I'll take that!

He walks back to the lady, returning her bag. After getting back to his spot, he unfreezes time. The people that had noticed the robbery react with awe, while the thief stumbles in surprise and then turns tail and runs offstage.

Danny looks down at himself, seeming to consider the choice.

DANNY

What did I just do?

(Chuckling nervously)

I'm no hero! I'm Danny. I'm just...who am I?

He begins to ponder this, becoming more certain.

New Kid

Danny: Sometimes in life

You get weighed down

Your troubles pile up

Ya know they're draggin' you down

Look around

You're the new kid in town

You feel a feeling

Pullin' at you

You know there's something

You gotta do

Not just keep your head down
Cause you're the new kid in town

So new kid, take a stand
New kid, hit your mark
New kid, make a name for yourself
You gotta get out there and show us who you are

Ya see I got this power
In a meteor shower
Astronomical odds at best
And now there's trouble in my area
Really getting scary, uh
Why not put this stuff to the test?
Wasn't feeling too alive
A student, nine to five
Not really making the world a better place
But I have quite the time
Cleaning up crime
So this is how I save the day!

In the background, an armed robber is running by. Danny quickly stops time, takes his gun and throws it offstage, and trips him before unfreezing time. As Danny resumes his song, police catch the man and citizens celebrate in the background.

And I gotta go hard, I gotta give it my all
I got these gifts and somebody's gotta answer the call
I'll fight this evil, and I'll rise to the top
And ain't nobody gonna make me stop

Cause I'm the--

Company: New kid, take a stand
New kid, take your shot
New kid, make a name for yourself
You gotta get out there and show us whatcha got

Danny turns his hoodie into a makeshift disguise and launches into a dance montage of stopping criminals by freezing time. Each time, the crowd grows, with people beginning to notice him post-freeze, while he tries to avoid just that.

As Danny walks away from his latest "Scene of Justice", his hood pulled low, Sam runs into him.

SAM

Whoa! You're--you're the guy who's been stopping all the robbers right?

DANNY

Ah, uh,
(Lowering his voice)
Um, yes. That's me.

SAM

This is gonna be really weird, but can I ask you a few questions?

DANNY

(Normal voice)
I'd love that!
(Catching himself)
I mean, uh sure.

Sam: So you're Cityville's new powered person,
Clearly not a coward, nursin'
Teleportation, or super speed?

Danny: Actually it's time I freeze
To stop crime with ease
This little watch here is all I need

SAM

Dude, that is so cool! Sorry, fangirl moment.

Sam: Now I gotta ask, why do ya do it?
There's thousands of powereds just gettin' by
So what's the deal with you, what do ya got to prove,
That makes ya different from the other guy?

Danny: Well you see when I was younger,
I had this growin' hunger
I felt this fire burnin'
Within me, a burden

I was hurtin'
Trying to get a word in
Failing and wonderin'
How I could make a difference
When gravity pulled would I offer resistance?
But now I got these powers, a fighting chance
I gotta step up, fight back, take a stance
And skirt around danger and death, emancipate
Myself from fear of failure, not desert
At the first sign of trouble, and hey--
When others back down, give up, fold,
I'll still be out there, holding
My position, gaining ground, shooting down opposition
'Cause when life gives you lemons, offers a hand,
You gotta fight for your beliefs, take a stand
See now I'm up here, and soon one day
I'll still be fighting, and you'll hear 'em say

SAM

Can we do this again sometime?

DANNY

Any day!

Company: It's that--

New kid, take a stand
New kid, out in front
New kid, make a name for yourself
You gotta get out there and show us whatcha want
Whatcha want

Danny: You gotta ask yourself, new kid,
Whaddaya want?!?

Company: Whaddaya Want?

SAM

Well, what do you want?

Danny opens his mouth to speak but stops and hesitates for a moment, then continues:

Danny: I wanna be the hero
I wanna save the day
I wanna get the girl

And hear the whole town shout hooray
I wanna be the hero
Don't wanna be no average joe
I wanna be the hero
I wanna be the hero
I wanna be the hero
I wanna be the hero
I wanna be the--

Danny:Hero

I wanna save the day
I wanna get the girl
And hear the whole town shout hooray
I wanna be the hero
Don't wanna be no average joe
I wanna be the hero
I wanna be the--
I wanna be the--
I wanna be the--

Hero!

Company: New kid

Take a stand
New Kid
Out in front
New kid
Make a name for yourself
You gotta get out there and
Show us who you are
Whatcha got
Whatcha want

New Kid!

BLACKOUT .

Act I, Scene 3

It is day again. In the midst of a downtown crowd, Mr. Z stands center stage.

MR. Z

So the young Danny is already starting to get a handle on his powers. The kid's a quick learner! But as you'll see, this does make him quite the attention-grabber. Not good at all for someone still learning the ropes with keeping one's secret identity, well, a secret. And here he comes now!

As Mr. Z disappears offstage again, we see Danny is walking down a busy street when he bumps into a hooded figure.

DANNY

(Attempting to continue on his way)

Oh, sorr-

Suddenly the figure turns around and pulls him aside.

DANNY

Hey! What's going on?

MAN

Keep your voice down kid, and calm down. I know who you are.

DANNY

What are you talking about?

He pulls down his hood to reveal himself to be BYRON WATTERS, a grizzled old man.

DANNY

Byron Watters?

WATTERS

Hey! I told you, keep your voice down. I haven't been seen in public in 10 years and that ain't gonna change now.

DANNY

What do you want? Don't you have...reclusive millionaire things to be doing?

WATTERS

(In a knowing tone)

I'm more than just a rich hermit, same way you're more than some fresh-faced college kid. Now c'mon--Danny, right?--c'mon Danny.

As the two leave, The City drop lifts to reveal the interior of Watters' mansion. Danny looks around in awe.

DANNY

This place is bigger than my dorm building!

WATTERS

All just a facade, kid. The shiny exterior keeps people occupied enough to not ask questions.

He throws a switch, and bookcases and walls flip around to reveal a Batcave-esque HQ. Danny's initial awe doubles as he slowly walks up to a mounted mask, taking it all in.

DANNY

This mask...you're Knight Raider? Of the Alliance Order?

WATTERS

Was.

DANNY

You-you guys were the best super team ever! Took down the worst baddies, saved the world a handful of times...

WATTERS

(Now admiring the wall himself and nodding)

Yes...those were the good old days. Not like now. Now...

(shaking his head)

"heroes" are flashy, superficial celebrities, or else brutal vigilantes with a warped sense of justice. No one really knows how to be a hero anymore.

DANNY

Why are you telling me this?

WATTERS

I told you, I've been watching you. That's how I figured out who you were. For a young, new super in town, you're already getting lots of notice. You're gonna need to step up your game.

DANNY

I can handle myself fine.

WATTERS

For now, but pretty soon even dodging bullets gets boring. Running at em sounds much more fun.

DANNY

Well why do you care so much about me?

WATTERS

I haven't seen a case like this in years.

DANNY

Like what?

WATTERS

Like someone brand new to the game, no influences, no allegiances. A lot of people are gonna wanna use you for their goals, but if making the world a better place is what you're after, then let me teach you. I know what I'm talking about.

I've Been Close Enough

Watters: I've been close enough

Seen the other side

That superhero stuff

Is quite a wild ride

You put in the work, do your time

But the people around you can turn on a dime

You spend day and night becoming bona fide

But your so-called fans are never satisfied

You want bigger, and better, if not the best

And your increasing assailants continue to test
Just how well you manage under stress
But somehow I survived that comic book mess

When I was cl--

DANNY

Whoa, whoa, whoa, it can't all be doom and gloom, right?
Whatever happened to the glory days?

Watters harrumphs, but then nods slowly.

Well some days, you have a blast
Your dark or'gin story seems far in the past
You're joking and quipping and trading jabs
With your teammates while your spandex hugs your abs
But gettin' there is quite a climb
And though bein' a hero feels so sublime
You could just as quickly pay a real steep price
So I'd be inclined to take my advice

'Cause I've been close enough
I've seen that other side
Let me tell ya, it gets rough
So settle in for the ride
I was close enough
For the knowledge I derive
And when the going got tough
I did what I had to to survive
When I was close enough

*Danny suddenly jumps into the song, his version much more
lighter and excited.*

Danny: But we can get me close enough
To that other side
I want that superhero stuff
I'm along for the whole ride

*He looks at Watters pleadingly for a moment, who then is
suddenly overtaken by the youthful excitement himself.*

Watters: We can get you close enough!

Both: See you grow and thrive
When the going gets rough

Watters: Teach you to survive
survive

Danny: Teach me to

In the background, training equipment and hosts of super suits begin to appear. Watters talks excitedly over the instrumentals.

WATTERS

You're going to need to report in for training five days a week
at 6.

DANNY

6?

WATTERS

You're right, make it 5. We'll work on these time freezing
abilities of yours. Also pick a suit.

DANNY

(Admiring the collection)

These are all yours?

WATTERS

The rich team member always just buys em generic, in bulk. Take
your pick.

Danny walks over, and after a moment's consideration, picks out what will become HIS SUPER-SUIT. He holds it up, and Watters nods approvingly.

WATTERS

One more thing: your name.

DANNY

Right! Any suggestions?

WATTERS

How about: timester?

DANNY

Ew!

WATTERS

Clock-meister.

DANNY

No.

WATTERS

5 O'clock Shadow?

DANNY

Hard pass.

He turns to leave.

WATTERS

Freeze kid! Training starts today!

DANNY

Oh, right--wait! Freeze Frame!

WATTERS

I like it.

A chord launches them both into song again.

Both: With a little more training and a little more time

Watters: You'll be ready to begin your climb
And you'll be out and
On your way

Danny: I'll be ready to begin my climb
And I'll be headed out and
On my way

Both: A fully-formed hero that saves the day!

Watters: 'Cause I've been close enough
I've been close enough
I've been close...
Enough

As Watters sinks back into deeper thought and the final note is struck, the music fades out and the lights dim.

Act I, Scene 4

Danny staggers into his apartment, exhausted from training with Watters. He holds his new suit draped over his arm, which he holds up for inspection, giving it a once-over.

DANNY

(Whistling low)

One of the greats. Could be me!

A sudden yawn hits him. He throws the costume on a chair and sinks down into bed.

DANNY

(Repeating himself, but slower as sleep kicks in)

Could...be...

Lights dim as Danny drifts off. In the background, a slow rumble that becomes recognizable as a drum roll begins. An wavering organ chord is struck, then another. Spotlights begin flashing as laughter fills the air. The booming voice of Mr. Z follows.

MR. Z

(OFFSTAGE)

Ladies and gentlemen!

Danny bolts upright, looking around.

MR. Z

(OFFSTAGE)

Welcome to this spectacular spectacle, this magnificent magnus!

DANNY

What the--what's going on!

MR. Z

(OFFSTAGE)

Danny Newman, welcome to your front row seats to the most stupefying show on Earth! Sit back and enjoy the breathtaking experience...of your own mind.

The noise all comes to a crashing halt. In the silence, Mr. Z begins a grandiose entrance onstage as a spotlight follows him down a set of stairs. A piano strikes up a chord.

Your Wildest Dreams

Mr. Z: Every whisper in the night
When the sun has abandoned us once again
May be dismissed as madness by most but
You know these thoughts are your friends

Hit it!

A band ensemble, heavy with jazzy brass and guitar riffs, swings into action. As Mr. Z dances about the stage, it is lit to reveal a dreamland of Danny's fantasies, with which the former interacts with some as he sings.

Every whisper in the night
Comes from some far-off dreamland
But even the wildest of these night musings
Are extending a helpin' hand
So if you give in to these desires
Throw the fuel on your mental fires
See the benefits you'll reap, ooh,
Nothing will keep you
From a world
Beyond your wildest dreams!

Just see what your mind can create!
C'mon kid, this show'll be great!
Chasing every fantasy
Enriches your reality
And you'll be in grasp
Of your wildest dreams

Mr. Z saunters up to Danny, who is still taken aback by all this.

MR. Z

Ah, now let's see, kid, whatcha got cookin around in this head
of yours?

He pulls out a book and begins flipping through it.

DANNY

Uh, what?

MR. Z

I wanna help you see your dreams come true! Now let's have a
look--fame and fortune, hot babes, open a show on Broadway--
(stopping on a page)

oh, now here's the biggie! You wanna be a hero. Now this'll be
good.

The dream begins to shift to manifest a superhero theme.

Every hero story's a grand tale
But the greatest have special success
The magic of the comics, the roar of the fans
Anything you do makes them scream "yes!"
People will put your name in lights
Publicize your every super-powered fight
You won't disappear, no!
You'll be the hero
You see
In your wildest dreams

Ooooooh you'll punch the bad guys so hard you see the sound--
Pow!
You'll have the adoration of the whole damn town
Wow!
You'll be everything they're looking for
They'll worship you! They'll beg for more!
They'll give you all you've ever wanted
From you wildest dreams

*The entire company breaks into dance as the band grows more
intense.*

Listen kid, 'cause this is quite the offer
One you're not likely to hear again
I'll help you achieve your wildest desires
I'll be your very best friend

Everything comes to a crescendo, and then, a pause, as Mr. Z draws out the preceding lyrics and extends a hand. Danny eyes it hesitantly.

DANNY

What are you?

The music slows down dramatically with Mr. Z's response.

I'm an expert in the field of dreams
And helping you get yours will be a breeze!
I'll be your guide on this whimsical journey
And you can call me Mr. Z, if you please

Danny, making a split second decision, grabs his hand. Mr. Z grins and pulls him close, ushering him to center stage as the chorus surrounds them.

MR. Z

Get ready! Here comes the big finish!

The entire company begins to sing behind him in a kick-line tempo.

So if you want all of your dreams to come true	Chorus: Wah wah wah wah wah wah wha wah wah wah wah
Look no further than you know who	Wah wah wah wah wah wah wha wah wah wah wah
I like you kid, I wanna make you a star	Wah wah wah wah wah wah wha wah wah wah wah
'Cause you and me, we'll go far	Wah wah wah wah wah wah wha wah wah wah wah

So brace yourself and hold on tight
As we embrace the wisdom of the night
My help is at your beck and call
I won't stop until you have all
Of
Your wildest dreams

As he belts the last note, the chorus dances offstage as the band goes wild, and then comes to a crashing finish along with him.

Your wildest dreams!

Yeah!

DANNY

Mr. Z, huh? So what exactly are you?

MR. Z

A benevolent friend in need, Danny boy! I know all about how to achieve your dreams.

DANNY

Well you made that pretty clear, but how do you know any of this? How are we even having this conversation?

MR. Z

I'm a psychic, kid! I can use my powers to enter your mind. And I've spent years in the super-field.

DANNY

Lemme guess, you've got the same reasons I'm important as ol' Watters?

MR. Z

Ding ding ding! I've been watching you for quite some time, kid, and you've got real potential. I just want to help you use it for what you want.

DANNY

What I want? Aren't there...higher goals?

MR. Z

Well obviously if you want those, you're good to go, right?

DANNY

Hmm...I guess that does make sense.

MR. Z

Now we're talking! I'll be helping you every step of the way kid! Anytime you need me--don't worry, I know where to find you.

He exits dramatically as the last bars of his song are played again, then a brief flash of lights reveals Danny back in bed, wide awake.

Act I, Scene 5

It is still night. Danny, wide awake from his crazy dreams, is walking the streets, breaking in his super suit.

DANNY

First Watters, now Mr. Z? Can this night get any crazier?

From behind him, the voice of SPEED DEMON replies unexpectedly.

SPEED DEMON

That is never something you wanna ask as a super.

DANNY

(Yelping)

I didn't mean it!

Speed Demon appears from around the corner of an alley, strolling up to Danny. The two young men are roughly the same age, though Speed Demon wears a ragtag outfit that is a mixture of street clothes and nylonish-spandex. He is unruly and looks tougher simply because he carries himself with more confidence.

SPEED DEMON

Relax, man. I'm not gonna hurt 'cha. We're on the same team.

DANNY

(Looking him up and down)

Are you a super?

SPEED DEMON

You betcha! Speed Demon is the street name.

DANNY

How do you guys keep finding me?

SPEED DEMON

(Gesturing to him)

You got the suit on, man.

DANNY

(Looking down)

What do you want?

SPEED DEMON

You should come with me. I gotta show you something.

DANNY

My mom always told me not to follow strange men into alleyways.

SPEED DEMON

Look, right now, you're all alone. You need people like you to ride with--people who have your back.

DANNY

Then lead the way.

The two disappear into the alleyway. The lights go dark, and the set changes. Dim lighting comes up only on Danny and Speed Demon, making their way through a dank corridor.

DANNY

You didn't tell me you were taking me on a tour of the sewer!
What the heck is down here?

SPEED DEMON

Hey man, not all heroes have the luxury of tower penthouses. We vigilantes have gotta stay more lowkey.

DANNY

Hold on, did you say--

A low rumble of muffled music is heard. Speed Demon comes to a hatch and throws it open, revealing the hideout of the VIGILANTES. The stage is suddenly bathed in booming sounds and bright lights as the audience takes in what appears to be a wild party, Vigilantes dancing around and hanging about while frequently using their powers for convenience or to show off.

*****VIGILANTE SONG*****

As the number ends, the raging party scene resumes. Speed Demon catches Danny in the crowd.

SPEED DEMON
(Yelling over the noise)
Pretty cool, huh?

DANNY
(Yelling back)
Yeah, dude! This place is awesome!

SPEED DEMON
(Sticking out his hand)
Now that we're here, I can tell you my real name: Tarrance.
Tarrance Flash.

DANNY
Aren't our real names supposed to be secret?

SPEED DEMON
(Snorting)
If you aren't rich or a scientist, no one cares if you go by John Smith or Commodore Rainbow. Now you gonna shake my hand or not?

DANNY
(Taking and shaking it)
Danny Newman.

SPEED DEMON
Nice to meet ya, Danny.

A younger girl, ALLEYKAT, slides up to Speed Demon, also wearing a rough Vigilante costume.

SPEED DEMON
This is my friend, Kara! She goes by Alleykat. She'll sneak up on ya, though. She's a teleport.

ALLEYKAT
(Shaking her head)
I shadow travel, S-D, there's a difference!
(Then, taking on a more serious tone)

He's ready for him.

SPEED DEMON
(Looking back at Danny)
Oh, right! C'mon!

DANNY
What now?

Speed Demon and Alleykat are already heading back into the crowd. The latter stops and shoots him a backwards glance.

ALLEYKAT
Learn to ask questions later. Just dive in!

He sighs and follows her. Suddenly, we see above the party, in a secluded balcony, Vigilante leader STEEL paces, while his number 2 SAMURAI leans nervously on a corner, and the insubordinate LONE WOLFFE stretches out on a sofa. The three are mid-conversation.

WOLFFE
Obviously, the Ultras think we're the enemy. Wizard's latest press release says we're no better than criminals.

STEEL
So we go on like normal. Some people just never have trusted us.

SAMURAI
If this is so concerning, why don't we just try to get more people on our side?

WOLFFE
Oh-ho, plenty of us have tried that! I for one serve plenty of justice every night and don't get any credit for it.

SAMURAI
Executing mobsters is hardly justice.

WOLFFE

Well if you're looking for the pacifists club, you found the wrong place lady.

STEEL

Enough! We already have supers on the brink of fighting supers.
I will not have that in my own ranks.

WOLFFE

And what would be so bad about blowing off a little steam on the Ultras?

STEEL

(Deadly serious)

We fight to protect the innocent. The only ones endangered by their taunts are us.

Samurai clears her throat and cocks her head to SD, Alleykat, and Danny, who have arrived at the loft. Steel's demeanor instantly changes to warm and friendly.

STEEL

Ah, you're the one Speed Demon told us about!

SPEED DEMON

His name is Danny.

(Catching himself)

Uh, sir.

STEEL

Come in, come in Danny. Welcome to our humble little abode.

DANNY

Actually, it's pretty impressive down here.

WOLFFE

Pfft. For heroes who save lives on the daily? Yeah, right.

SAMURAI

I've always thought it had some charm.

STEEL

Danny, you know who we are, right?

(He nods)

Well I'm not sure what you've heard about the Vigilantes, but for starters, we're not even a team. Just a community, a place for supers who don't have anywhere else to go. Our bonds are deep and tight, though. You run with us, you're family.

DANNY

And you want me here?

STEEL

You're a young kid just figuring all this out for the first time. I want to give you somewhere where people can help you.

DANNY

Well...thank you. If it's all the same to you, uh, I'd be glad to hang here when I get the chance.

STEEL

That's all the commitment we need son.

SPEED DEMON

(Ruffling Danny's hair)

Welcome, brother!

WOLFFE

You got a name besides Danny?

DANNY

Actually, "Freeze Frame" is growing on me.

STEEL

I like it, I like it. Well hey, we're always here for you Freeze Frame. But for now, you kids go have fun.

The trio runs back into the crowd. Lone Wolffe stretches audibly as he gets up off the sofa.

WOLFFE

I'll show myself out. I mean what I said though, chief.

Something's gotta give eventually. We might as well be ready for
it.

He exits.

SAMURAI

You really think that kid can make a difference?

STEEL

(Staring off the balcony into the crowd)

Something tells me he just might.

Fade out.

Act I, Scene 6

Stage lights come back up, but only partially. It is night time in a dark part of the city. Mr. Z slyly strolls onto stage.

MR. Z

Well well well, Danny's just getting started in the hero world, it seems! But this story isn't all about him--
or even all about heroes at all. For--

Background music takes on a sinister tone.

MR. Z

(In a mock-dramatic narrator voice)

Meanwhile, other forces gather to plot. Forces more sinister, more evil, more...villainous.

We see in the center of the stage, three individuals sit around a table.

MR. Z

Behold, the greatest super villains known to man! Nathaniel Honors, evil billionaire. The Tyrant, traitor to heroes and despot of Varvaria! And Obsidious, a dark and powerful crime lord. Their target? The heroes of Cityville. Let's take a listen.

Mr. Z slips offstage as the we focus in, mid-conversation, on THE CABAL, expressed in a sinister harmonious number.

Dark Shadows

NH: Gentlemen we're gathered here to discuss our evil affairs

O: To control Cityville, expand our reign of terror

T: Our plans often vile, but they get the job done
Sinisterly, secretly, our battles our won

All: In dark shadows

We rule the night
In dark shadows
From the background we control the fight
The masters of villains, we gather here
To plot our next move, in ruling in fear

O: The heroes are again a nuisance to our plans

Others: Ohh

T: They must be dismantled

Ahh

NH: Destroyed and disbanded'd

Ohh

T: So we'll pool our resources
Ohh

O: Plot and scheme

Ahh

NH: Destroy them and move on to realizing our dream

Ohh

All: Of dark shadows
Once more, they'll succumb to our might
And dark shadows
Will spread through the world, our birthright
So we'll break the heroes, ignite their downfall
And nothing will stop us from ruling all

In dark shadows
Dark shadows
Dark shadows

T: Oh whoa whoa
O: Oh whoa whoa
NH: Ah yeah

We are
The dark shadows

All three villains speak with a certain, clipped, refined cadance.

HONORS

Gentlemen, gentlemen, we must remember that the Supers are not independent of each other. They follow rule of factions...and the most powerful, most prominent sect is the Ultras.

OBSIDIOUS
(*Scoffing*)

They're entertainers. Perhaps a real threat at one point, but not anymore.

TYRANT

(Nodding in concurrence)

I didn't fly all the way here to throw resources into dealing with some sensationalized knockoff of the Alliance Order.

HONORS

Yes, they aren't difficult targets, but to publicly defeat them--to humiliate them--would strike deep at the heart of all supers in Cityville. It could be the final crack in the foundation we need for control.

TYRANT

You do make a good point. But our involvement must be kept secret.

HONORS

Of course. In fact, any big-name villain we could call in runs the risk of turning things from an embarrassment to a tragedy. We need someone who can truly make a mockery of them.

OBSIDIOUS

(Leaning forward)

I may have the man for the job.

HONORS & TYRANT

Yes?

OBSIDIOUS

A guy by the name DeVito, calls himself "Emperor." Average Joe kinda guy, barely heard of him a month ago but now just about the whole villain community here worships him. He's got the brains and the resources to make it happen.

TYRANT

Did you bring him here?

OBSIDIOUS

Of course! He has his pitch ready and everything.

(Yelling to door)

Bobby!

The villain known as EMPEROR trounces in, eagerly shaking the hands of the big bads. He is dressed in eccentrically bright colors, complete with cane and hat. His voice is uneven but cheery, the joyful lilt of someone with a very fragile grip on sanity.

EMPEROR

Hello, gents and...gents! Whoa-hoah, female part a little underwritten, huh? Hah! I'm just kidding, I'm sure you have plenty of henchwomen in revealing clothing somewhere!

OBSIDIOUS

(Clearing his throat)

Bobby, tell these men what you bring to the table.

EMPEROR

Oh, right! I've got a plan to get Cityville's attention. Not to just defeat the heroes, but to make a show out of it. Spring a trap, capture the Ultras, and make their demise such a roaring trainwreck that no one can look away or forget. And I can do it because I have *understanding*.

HONORS

(Unimpressed)

Understanding, Mr. DeVito?

EMPEROR

You want a spectacle, right? Well, picture this: another sunny day. Suddenly, everyone's in danger, but the hero swoops in, saves the day. It's a given. No one cares about him. Everyone's attention is on the other guy. That's what I understand.

TYRANT

We don't follow.

EMPEROR

All due respect your evilness, but I can tell. Look, what I'm
trying to say is...

*He claps, and the lights go down except for a single spotlight
on a chair centerstage. Emperor sits and picks up a ukulele,
beginning to strum.*

The "Bad Guys"

Emperor: It's all about the bad guys, lord
 Their evil plots and henchmen hordes
 It can really drive a guy insane
 I guess we're all just obsessed with the fact
 That there are those much worse than us and that
 There are consequences for goin' against the grain

Emperor stands and begins to pace.

You see, the bad guys get the cool evil base
An enigmatic name, some epic scars on their face
They have the signature pet that they hold in their laps
They have some wicked henchmen, set some bad-ass traps
We have fan theories, for every aspect of their lives
We know their flaws, but have no respect for their lies
Their cool actions and one liners make us drool
And every plot they scheme up makes us say, "damn that's cool!", cause--

It's all about the bad guys, lord
Their evil plots, their henchmen hordes
It can really drive a guy insane
I guess we're all just obsessed with the fact
That there are those much worse than us and that
There are consequences for goin' against the grain

He breaks into dance.

Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada
Da da da

But the bad guys get the cool evil gadgets and devices
Bend the whole world just to satisfy their vices
Their minds work like those of a genius
But they're broken puzzles with fractured pieces
And the tragic backstories are the worst of it all
Cause Humpty Dumpty wasn't broken till he had his great fall
They're normal guys until tragedy strikes
But it's the monster catalyst and it *drives like a knife!*

But

I'm really not that bad a guy, lord
I sing in major chords
I prefer artistic, not insane
And you can rest assured with the fact
That there are those much worse than I and that
I just got lucky goin' against the grain

Well, I've cleaned up all the crime in this city
A record feat that, let me tell ya, wasn't pretty
But every criminal here now bends to my wishes
And if they don't, well, they'll sleep with the fishes
But what to do with this formidable force
Well I suggest we take a new course
Of action, turn Cityville around
I got a brand new plan for this spark-a-lin' town
But I'll warn ya now, don't get in my way
Cause to make this omelette, we'll have to crack a few skulls--

Skulls, no, heads, uh--eggs!

Break a few eggs as they say!
And that includes Cityville's finest
The heroes, the "good guys",
though if they try to stop me they'll find they're minus
A few appendages *at best!*
So go ahead put my plan to the test
And if they do try to stop me, it's just as well
Cause I've ordered my whole army to give em hell!

The lights come up behind him to reveal a whole chorus line of bad guys.

Villain Chorus: Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada
Da da da
Da da da da

Emperor: I'm really not the bad guy here
With my new plan, you've nothing to fear!
The word you're looking for is *brilliant*, not insane!
Badadadada datdadayadada
And while I may become the worst around
You can rest assured this sorry town
Will find salvation goin' against the grain!

Villains: Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada

All: Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada
Da da da

Emperor: All about the bad guys
It's all about the bad guys lord
All about the bad guys

Villains: Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada

All: Da da da
Da da da

Emperor: Why's it always gotta be
about the bad guys?

Villains: Wop!

BLACKOUT.

Act I, Scene 7

It is daytime in downtown cityville. Mr. Z once again stands downstage at his narrating post.

MR. Z
(Looking around)

Just another normal day in peaceful Cityville! Or so it seems.

A loud noise startles the people around him.

MR. Z

No, yeah, normal day. Believe it or not, they're just kinda used to these things.

The everyday passerby are suddenly scattered at the sound of a ruckus. Danny, Speed Demon, and Alleykat burst onstage with two supervillains bound in rope. They begin to tie them up to a street post.

MR. Z

Ah, but this is new! It would appear Danny is starting to run with some fellow heroes--some Vigilantes, no less. I'll leave them to it.

He slides offstage, and we cut into the middle of an animated conversation between the heroes.

DANNY

Whoa! That was so cool guys!

ALLEYKAT

Eh. You get used to it.

SPEED DEMON

Nah, totally man! You were great out there! Stopping time like wa-pow!

DANNY

Did you see yourself go! Whoooosh!

The two continue to ad-lib verbs to describe the story as Samantha walks onstage. Noticing the scene, she face lights up with excitement and rushes over.

SAM

Oh my goodness, Freeze Frame!

DANNY

Heyyy!

(Lowering his voice)

Er, hello, miss reporter lady.

SAM

Mind a few questions?

SPEED DEMON

(Stepping in front of Danny)

We always have time for a few--

ALLEYKAT

She was talking to him, motormouth.

DANNY

Well, we caught these guys trying to rob a jewelry store
downtown.

SAM

(Giving them a once-over)

Looks like you've stepped up your game! These are real
supervillains, costume and all.

DANNY

(Bashful)

Yeah.

SPEED DEMON

(Covering for him)

We've been running into a lot of them, lately.

ALLEYKAT

Yeah, Steel--er, we--think more villains are on the move.

SAM

(Furiously scribbling)

Any idea why?

DANNY

Well we do have some ideas--

A sound similar to a jet landing is heard offstage. With cape flowing, PHOTON, master of fire and light, walks up to Danny.

PHOTON
(Sounding more than a little uptight)
Freeze Frame?

DANNY
Uh, yeah? That'd be me.

PHOTON
I'm going to have to ask you to accompany me to Ultra Tower.

SPEED DEMON
Now hold on just a minute, Lite Brite! Danny here hasn't done nothing wrong!

PHOTON
(Barely resisting sneering at him)
Mr. Frame--

ALLEYKAT
(Aside; Incredulous)
Mister Frame?

PHOTON
--has been cordially invited to call upon Lance Proctor, AKA Wizard.

SAM
AKA one of the coolest superheroes in town!
(Eyeing SD and Alleykat)
Oh, sorry guys.

DANNY
Well, uh, I guess I can't say no that that...can I?

PHOTON
(Shaking his head)
Let's go.

They exit, and the set changes to reveal the grandiose top floor of Ultra Tower. Danny is walking around, taking in the view, when Wizard enters. His sparkly super suit looks halfway between a blingy tuxedo and the classic tight spandex. He carries himself with a very stringent poise, the exact opposite of Steel's relaxed warmth.

WIZARD

Ah, Danny my boy. Enjoying HQ?

DANNY

This--this is incredible!

WIZARD

It helps when your alter ego is rich. Of course, I worked for every cent of it. My father always said to me, "perseverance is the only real currency in the world."

(Aside)

Though the fortune he left me wasn't half bad.

DANNY

Not to sound rude, but...why on Earth did you want to see me?

WIZARD

Because I believe in our city, son. I believe in bright young supers with a dream heading out into the world to change it for the better. And then I see you, and, hell, you make me think of all of those things.

DANNY

So what, you want me to be some kind of symbol?

WIZARD

Oh, no! Just that you could be a great role model for a great many people. And I would hate for such a person to get lost in the confusion of all this hero stuff.

DANNY

Well, my offers for mentor are piling up--

WIZARD

I don't need to mentor you. Just be someone here to give you some advice. As someone who knows a whole lot about image and reputation, I want to make sure you're well equipped to be the hero world's next big thing.

DANNY

I'm flattered.

WIZARD

Well, it's the truth! But you really need to look at who you're becoming in this world. What you really want to do. And I can help you figure all of that out.

Go Out and Make a Difference

Wizard: My father always raised me
To be the best I could
To enjoy serving others
To enjoy doing good
And so maybe for some it brings the spotlight
But the end result matters not
So forget your endowments and inheritances
'Cause bein' a hero's not about what you got

As he goes into the chorus, the other Ultras come on stage around him.

You gotta
Go out
Go out and make a difference
Forget the powers you've been given
You gotta
Show people that you're driven
If you wanna earn an impressive air
You gotta
Show people that you care
You gotta
Go out
Go out and make a difference

Ultras: Do-wop
Wop, waddaya wop
Wah wah wop!

Wah wah wop!

Do-wop
Waddaya wop

So some seek attention
They try to put on a show

Some are loud and rambunctious
But that's not the way to go
So ignore the calls to arms
Those troublemakers only in it for glory
You gotta give if you wanna be great
If you want 'em to tell your story

All together now!

The number starts to become big and flashy, with Danny visibly catching on to the lack of connection between the Ultras' lyrics and actions.

Ultras: Go out	Do-wop
Go out and make a difference	Wop, waddaya wop
Seek to do better than the rest	
And you'll end up one o' the best	
Wizard: Just keep your cool and stay in line	Wah wah wop!
Don't ever let them hear you whine	
Just go out	
And make a difference	
Ultras: Wop waddaya wop wah wah wah	

Wizard's calm voice becomes a belt as he struts to the key change.

Wizard: And seek to help all you can
 You gotta be the better man
 Don't seek attention just PLEASE FIT IN!

He pauses, takes a deep breath, then sings the next line much higher and slower.

Just be your best you, and you're sure to winnnn...

Ultras: Wah wah wah wahdaya wow! Go out	
Go out and make a difference!	Wop! Wah wahdaya wow!
Wizard: Choose to be a part of my grand vision	Ultras: Doo woo!
Trust me, it's the right decision	
To go outttttt	Go out! Go out
	And make a difference
So push your selfish uniqueness down	Wah wah wah!
And join the best super team in town	Wop!
And go out	Wop, do-wop!

Go out
Go out and make a

Wop, waddaya
Badabababadababdaba

As the Ultras build up to the finish, they suddenly break out into a dance and tune akin to a polka big finish.

Difference

Difference! Difference! Hey!
Difference! Difference Hey!
Difference! Difference Hey!

Ultras: Go out and make a difference wop!

The Ultras hold their pose long enough for the lights to go down and the scene to change.

Act I, Scene 8

Back in Watters' secret hideout, Danny is training. Mr. Z stands centerstage, turning to address the audience.

MR. Z

Wow! An offer from the Ultras, hah! This kid is already on his way to soaring high. Of course, it would never be this easy in the comics, but ya know

(checking a nonexistent watch)

we only get two hours of your time. But man, look at him go!

As Mr. Z exits, we see Watters pacing around him, taking jabs with a staff, as Danny freezes time and narrowly avoids each stroke. Finally, he grows tired and unfreezes too early, allowing Watters to swat him.

DANNY

Ow!

WATTERS

You're getting sloppy. But you're not just tired, you're distracted, what's eating you?

DANNY

Oh, not much, just...getting offers from both the Ultras and Vigilantes.

WATTERS

(Stops)

And you didn't tell me this?

DANNY

(Defensive)

Relax, I've only seen you once since meeting the Vigilantes--

WATTERS

So those are those super kids you've been running with.

DANNY

I didn't think that made a difference--

WATTERS

The Vigilantes are dangerous! I respect some of them, but most of their biggest members threaten to completely derail the fragile balance of this city. They're no heroes.

DANNY

And I'm sure you've got plenty to say about the Ultras too, huh?

WATTERS

At least some of the Vigilantes' hearts are in the right place. The Ultras are just a walking display of glory.

DANNY

But it would be so cool to work with them--

WATTERS

Work *with* them? Playing around with two Vigilante newbies is one thing, actually picking a side is another!

DANNY

I thought you said I could bring people together.

WATTERS

If you make a name for yourself as your own hero, sure. Joining up with anyone now means you have to draw yet another line in the sand. People nowadays just can't let supers all be friends. It doesn't sell.

DANNY

(Growing irritated)

Well maybe if it comes down to it, I should be able to know where I would fall.

WATTERS

THAT is exactly the kind of thought that's going to tear us all apart!

(Realizing he's yelling, he softens his tone only slightly)

Just stay out of the conflict altogether, kid.

DANNY

*(Upset, but not at Watters as much as the fact that he earned
such a scolding)*

I appreciate the advice, but I'm just here to train. And I think
I'm gonna call it for today.

He sulks offstage. Watters begins to call after him.

WATTERS

Danny! Dan-ah, poor kid. Someone's gotta teach him the world is
a cruel place, though.

*At this, Danny begins to hesitantly walk back onstage, but he
stops just a few paces later as he realizes Watters has already
begun to rant in the form of song.*

Watch Your Back

Watters: So now you think life is nice and easy
Felt your way round, got it all figured out
But don't get used to that sunshine-and-breezy
Being acutely aware's now paramount

Watch your back
Don't pick sides in a fight that's not your own
Watch your back
Be careful 'round forces you can't control
Though you think you're familiar with everything around ya
Your unseen enemies surround ya
Don't get caught up in boasts
Cause that's then they're most
Likely to stab ya in the back

So be careful kid, please listen to me here
Confidence is good, but so's a healthy dose of fear
I just wanna see ya make it, take it from me
You might soon be a star, but don't lose sight of reality
Don't be blinded to your situation
Please continue to care about choices you're makin'
And above alllll

Watch your back
Don't pick sides in a fight that's not your own
Watch your back

You're dealing with forces you can't control
Don't let them divide you along their lines
Stay strong in yourself, and you'll turn out fine!
And remember, though you doubt me
Where'd ya be without me? So
Watch your back!

The scene changes to Danny's apartment, where he enters and slumps on his bed. With a dramatic flair and music to match, Mr. Z enters behind him.

MR. Z

Danny, kid, you seem distressed.

DANNY

Wha--oh, you. Yeah, of course the actual super hero work isn't that hard, it's all the little things.

MR. Z

And you need to figure out how to navigate, yes?

DANNY

I mean, I guess.

MR. Z

Well don't worry, I'm here every step of the way to encourage you to pursue what's good for you.

DANNY

You're not gonna give me another lecture like old man Watters, are you?

MR. Z

Of course not, kid! I only want to help you be the best hero you can be, and I know all about that!

DANNY

That's what everyone says.

MR. Z

Obviously, kid, you need to learn to open up a little bit. I've got the experience you need, now you just need to supply the trust.

Trust Me

Mr. Z: I crave to give you help
But you seem unsure if you want me to send it
I offer you advice
But you doubt my qualifications to lend it

In this topsy turvy world
Things can be not as they seem
You may feel enemies all around you
Like some endless, ominous dream
But even in this world of spies and double crossers
You need someone to depend upon
What I'm trying to say, is:
It's not a must, see,
But you can trust me
Danny

Mr. Z launches into dance as a peppy musical interlude begins.

Everything feels like it's closing in on you
You're trapped, you don't know what to do
Your enemies are watching, lying in wait
For you to make a fatal mistake
But even in the darkest hours
For someone blessed with super powers
You need a trusting face, a friend
To see you through until the end
And though you don't know me fully
Might I suggest yours truly?

It's not a must, see,
But you can trust me
Danny

Mr. Z dances to the interlude again, this time ad-libbing along with it. Suddenly, he sits down at a piano, striking dark, brooding chords.

And in this dark and twisted world

When everyone seems to turn their backs on you
You need a guiding figure
To trust in, who'll see you through
And oh with my powers of perception, I can make you a star
Just take my hand, kid, together we'll go far...

As the last note trails off, Mr. Z stands and begins to dance, slowly again, and then more energetically. Behind him, the piano continues to play on its own.

Why dontcha
Why dontcha
Why dontcha trust me?
Why dontcha
Why dontcha
Why dontcha trust me, Danny?

Danny begins to wander towards him, slowly feeling the rhythm.

Why dontcha
Why dontcha
Why dontcha trust me?

Why dontcha
Why dontcha
Dontcha see that you can trust me, Danny?

Danny becomes enthralled in Mr. Z's song, and the two dance together.

Dontcha see that you can trust me, Danny?

As outro music plays, the scene changes once again, and Danny is now fully costumed, sitting with Sam, still in his apartment.

SAM

Thanks for agreeing to meet me here. My friends' apartment is a lot nicer than mine.

DANNY

(With a tone of wink-and-nod)
He seems like a great guy.

SAM

(Missing the remark)

So tell me, Freeze Frame, how's the superhero life going?

DANNY

On or off the record?

SAM

(Pausing)

How about off? Let's just talk. We haven't done that yet.

DANNY

Not great, actually. I've been working with some Vigilante friends of mine, but we keep running into more and more villains. And I love hanging out with them, but I'm not sure if I wanna be a Vigilante...or an Ultra.

SAM

Even though they both seem to want you?

DANNY

Exactly. I don't know where I want to be...that is, if I wanna be anywhere.

SAM

Well hey, think about this: you're already a superhero, working on the daily to protect people. That means you've already gotta be a pretty good guy.

DANNY

What do you mean?

SAM

C'mon, man! I barely know you and I can already tell you're a good person. All you gotta do is hold onto that, and where you end up will be the least of your worries!

Just Be You

Sam: Hey you, why do you look so down
When you're one of the coolest guys in town?

Don't let anyone drag you down
Your sorrows aren't nearly deep enough to drown

So when everyone's pulling you askew
Just be you
Just be you
Don't let their demands make you blue
Just be you
Just be you

Your worries might be justified
But doesn't mean they should keep you up at night
Just 'cause you think you've tried and tried
And yet they seem unsatisfied

Isn't a reason to feel subdued
Just be you
Just be you
Any bad things you feel just can't be true
Just be you
Just be you

I've wanted in your world all of my life
To me it seems like paradise
And you get it when you just materialize?
But why? Well you're you! I wouldn't think twice

'Cause you're you!

Danny: Just be you

Both: Just be you!
Just be you!
Just be you!

Danny: Please don't stop being you

Both: Just be you

The music slowly fades out as the lights dim.

Act I, Scene 9

In a darker corner of the City, two supervillains run across stage. Suddenly, their pursuers, the Ultras, emerge, chasing them across the stage.

WIZARD

Give it up, villains! We have you surrounded.

VILLAIN 1

(As both raise their hands)

OK, OK, we surrender!

PHOTON

(Scoffing)

Over all too easily.

WIZARD

Our battle would have indeed been something!

VIXEN

(Resting her arms on his shoulder)

But they already fear us too much to attempt a fight.

WIZARD

Good, good...a healthy fear is good.

(To the villains)

Alrighty, then, now that we have you surrounded--

Suddenly, the voice of Emperor retorts offstage.

EMPEROR

(Offstage)

I believe you have that backwards, dear Wizard.

The supervillain and his army storm on stage from all sides, boxing the heroes in. The Ultras all drop into their "hero poses", ready for a fight, as Emperor marches up to Wizard.

EMPEROR

Settle down, settle down folks.

The Ultras, not sure what how to react, reluctantly lower their guard. The villains immediately surge in and grab each hero, restraining them. Emperor cackles maniacally.

WIZARD

Who are you and what do you want with us?
(Switching tones from demanding to conversational)
And nice laugh, I'm impressed.

The fellow Ultras shoot him miffed looks.

EMPEROR

Why thank you, I've been working on it.
(Turning more serious)
But while I am but a mere crime lord, my plans for your super team will be sensational! Now that I have you captured, I am free to enact my plans.

PHOTON

(Struggling against his bonds)
And what are those?

EMPEROR

I'm going to let everyone in Cityville know of your capture. But no one will know what to do! Who will rescue the Ultras?

WIZARD

Th--the, uh--

EMPEROR

(Savoring his hesitation)
The who? The *Vigilantes*? Oh, that is great! The *Vigilantes* saving the Ultras? Of course, I've planned for this. If your underground friends do show face, we'll wipe the floor with them! Every hero in town will be humiliated by the time I'm through. And then...haha, and *then*, I'll just let you go! You'll be so humiliated that it might have been better if I actually killed you! It'll be so evil!

WIZARD
(Clicking his tongue)
How ironic.

EMPEROR
(Wheeling on him)
You know, it's not. Irony is the opposite of what's expected. My plans, however, will produce the most favorable results.

Wizard begins to speak, but Emperor anticipates this and speaks with him.

EMPEROR and WIZARD
(In sync)
You'll never get away with this!

EMPEROR
Ha! I knew you'd say that! Now I get to say "Oh, I already have", haha! Oh, this is so great! Everything's finally falling into place!

Right Where I Want You

Emperor: I must admit, I'm pleasantly surprised
My hopes and goals, now realized
The ambitions I've held onto, the plans that I've had
The plots I've dreamt up are now coming to pass

A high-pitched piano rolls into a ragtime-sounding chorus.

'Cause you're
Right where I want you
There's nothing you can do
My aspirations are comin' true
You're right where I want you

Every good scheme must be fined tuned and rich
It's so exhilarating when they go off without a hitch
And so you fell for my trap, exactly as planned
C'mon, don't be angry, you gotta give me a hand!

I gotcha
Right where I want you

There's nothing you can do
Make one wrong move, and you're through
You're right where I want you

Hit it!

Emperor and his henchmen break out into dance.

You must admit, I've got it all down pat
Gotcha in here quicker than maze-trained rats!
Monologue's outta the way, so we're moving right along,
So I hope you can excuse my joyous song

'Cause I gotchu
Right where I want you
There's nothing you can do
And now we move on to stage two!

As Emperor draws out the last words, he hits a quick tap routine between each, also finishing with a flourish.

'Cause you're right where I--
Want--
You!

The number ends, and the villains roughly escort the Ultras away as Emperor dances around gleefully to an instrumental reprise, then follows them offstage.

Act I, Scene 10

Watters is in his study, relaxing in a big armchair, close to falling asleep. Suddenly, Danny rushes in.

WATTERS

Hey kid, what's the hurry? Thought your friend was the speedster.

DANNY

Do you have the news on?

WATTERS

Well yeah, but they're running some zonky program right now.

DANNY

(Glancing at TV)

That's MTV.

(Looking back to Watters)

How old are you?

WATTERS

(Shaking his head)

What's the damn news?

DANNY

(Serious again)

The Ultras are captured! Some maniac has them in a warehouse downtown, and it's crawling with villains. All those baddies who have been active lately, they're all there.

WATTERS

(Getting to his feet)

And you plan on doing what? Don't tell me you think you can rescue them.

DANNY

Not alone, but with the Vi--

WATTERS

The Vigilantes? If your maniac is letting the whole town know about this, he's gotta be planning for them. They'll be a mess-- that is, the ones even decent enough to try to help.

DANNY

That's why I need your help! We have to unite them--for the good of all supers!

WATTERS

Listen kid, supers don't just unite for the common good, whaddaya think this is, a comic book? Aside from your little rat pack, you aren't gonna be able to convince those karate amphibian wannabes to do anything.

DANNY

Well...not on my own.

WATTERS

What? You think...

DANNY

For the glory days?

WATTERS

(Deeply sighing)

I'm going to regret this.

DANNY

Yesssss!

He grabs Watters' arm and drags him offstage gleefully. The scene changes to Vigilante HQ, where the heroes are all in chaos over the current news. Steel stands with Samurai and Lone Wolfe on his balcony.

STEEL

Now everyone, everyone, settle down!

Speed Demon and Alleykat push onto the balcony behind them, the latter whispering to Steel. Steel ignores him for a second, but then wheels in surprise.

STEEL
Really?

Speed Demon nods. Steel clears his throat and steps out of the way. Danny emerges, clothed in his super suit, with Watters behind him.

DANNY
Everybody! I know things look crazy right now, but we're not gonna do any good just feeding that crazy. If we're going to rescue the Ultras, we have to be together.

LONE WOLFFE
And why should we rescue them?

ALLEYKAT
Because we're heroes! That's what we do.

DANNY
But don't just take it from me. Take it from Knight Raider.

There are murmurs as Danny too steps back and Watters takes the stage.

WATTERS
Now listen up, you bums.
(Everyone goes quiet)
It's time to suit up.

The vigilantes begin animatedly running around the stage and growing louder with excitement as a chord is struck and Watters begins to sing.

Suit Up

Watters: Whoooooah yeah!
So the city's on its knees
You think this is a little outside your expertise
Well pull yourselves together
It's not over til it's over
The battle's still yours to win

So put on the mask
And lose the fear
Make sure your spandex is tight
cause your time is near
Oh, so we're hurtling towards a climax
A big blockbuster test of might
But just be prepared and courageous
It's time to win the fight...
And suit up!

The Vigilantes break into dance as heavy synthesizer chords play in the background. Watters begin to inspect them.

Fasten your utility belts
Tighten your capes
Make sure your power's warmed up
And ready to go
Are we all ready?
So puff out your chest
And strike your super pose
Get ready for some action
Let's defeat these foes
Oh, the battle's drawing closer
It's time to put the hurt on them
'Cause you are the ones the city needs
When it's got such a big problem
You suit up!

Vigilantes: Check!
Check!

Let's go!

As the musical interlude begins a second time, the scene changes with the Vigilantes dancing, where we suddenly find ourselves in a warehouse downtown in the city. Many villains are lying in wait, and their battle with the Vigilantes is translated into dance.

Vigilantes: Suit up, suit up, suit up!

Everything slows down, and a spotlight falls on Speed Demon, gracefully dancing around his foes at "super speed".

Speed Demon: I'm a supersonic speed demon
Runnin' atcha, can't even
Understand whatcha seein'
Don't blame ya if ya disbelievin'

Don't think I can be stopped
I'll run until you drop
Can't catch me
I'm too fast to see
You're too slow
Now dontcha know
I'm a--

Alleykat begins fighting alongside him, sharing the spotlight and doing twice the work while catching his mistakes and covering his back, but always staying in his shadow.

Supersonic speed demon
Runnin' atcha, can't even
Understand whatcha seein'
Don't blame ya if ya disbelievin'
Don't think I can be stopped
I'll run until you drop
Can't catch me
I'm too fast to see
You're too slow
Don't ya know?

Alleykat: Ahhh
Ahh whoa-hoh

Ah ah ah!
Who-ah!

Don't ya know?

The music rises to a climax and suddenly we see Danny, mid-fight with a villain, turn and look at the audience.

DANNY
This is so cool!

Watters appears in the center of the stage and begins to sing again as the action slowly rotates around him.

Watters: Oh and now this is the showdown
The place where everyone knows
You show up and throwdown
You prove you're real heroes
You suit up!

As the battle reaches its height, Alleykat runs back onstage with the freed Ultras.

ALLEYKAT
No one taught you cronies how to play defense!

WIZARD

The Ultras are free! To battle!

They all cheer as a triumphant chord is struck, and the "battle" continues. Suddenly, the sound of an explosion rocks the stage.

SPEED DEMON

What was that?

LONE WOLFFE

I'm smokin' em out!

WIZARD

You idiot!

SAMURAI

Steel is still in there!

Danny is hit with a realization.

DANNY

I'll get him!

He freezes time and rushes into the flames. Inside, he finds Steel, pinned up against a wall by an armed Emperor. He runs over to the former and begins to pick him up when time suddenly unfreezes.

EMPEROR

(mid-sentence)

--our super strength doesn't make you bulletproof! Ahaha--oh,
what's this?

He levels his gun at Danny.

EMPEROR

Ah, so you're the timester.

DANNY

Freeze Frame to you! I suppose you're the maniac?

EMPEROR

Emperor, if you please. What a pleasure.

DANNY

What's the point of any of this? What do you want?

EMPEROR

(Chuckling)

There's a lotta heroes in our world, kid. Someone's gotta play the villain. Now tell me, can you freeze bullets, too?

He turns the gun back towards Steel and fires, and Danny freezes time. In any manner ranging from cheesy to high-budget effects, the paths of the bullets are visible as they slowly inch towards the heroes. Danny pushes Steel out of the way and then begins to swat them out of the air. As he strains to reach the last one, he suddenly loses control of time again, only grazing it.

However, his slight touch of the last bullet sends it glancing off a wall and right back into Emperor, who staggers back at impact.

EMPEROR

(Looking down at his chest)

How...ironic.

He crumples, and as the warehouse is consumed by flames, Danny helps Steel to his feet, and the two escape as the dance number concludes and the lights fade out.

Act I, Scene 11

The Ultra HQ penthouse has been turned into a giant banquet hall, with all the heroes celebrating at and around a long table. Reporters, including Sam, are abuzz throughout the room, and heroes of all creeds are animatedly talking to each other.

At center stage, Danny bumps into Sam.

SAM

Well hey, Freeze Frame! Excellent work out there.

DANNY

Uh, thank you, uh, lady I do not know?

SAM

What?

Steel and Wizard both simultaneously manifest behind him.

WIZARD

He really is something, isn't he? This young, fresh hero. He saved all of us!

STEEL

He saved my life. You did good, son.

WIZARD

You inspire people kid. You'd make a great Ultra!

STEEL

I didn't think he was seeking a position.

WIZARD

(As the two of them walk off, shooting a look back to Danny)
Just saying, if he ever wants to be one of the best...

SAM

Still having trouble?

DANNY

A little.

SAM

Don't worry, you'll figure it out. I believe in you.

She walks off, Danny watching her go.

In another part of the room, Samurai, Speed Demon, Alleykat and Lone Wolffe are talking.

SAMURAI

I'm proud of you two.

ALLEYKAT

Eh, it was nothing.

SPEED DEMON

Knock it off, that was awesome! We were awesome!

LONE WOLFFE

Yeah, you kids are right on your way to becoming bona fide sidekicks.

SPEED DEMON

Sidekicks?

SAMURAI

Don't listen to him, you kids are great.

From the head of the table, Wizard clinks a glass.

WIZARD

Super friends, we've had an absolutely terrific night. So as my dear father used to say, let's celebrate!

Everyone cheers, but suddenly everything freezes. Music starts up, and MR. Z enters.

*****ACT I FINALE*****

As the number concludes, Mr. Z slowly backs offstage, the chorus raises their voices to a shrill chord and the music falls.

Curtain and BLACKOUT.

Act II, Scene 1

As the lights come back up, we see nothing onstage but Mr. Z.

MR. Z

Hey, welcome back! Hope you enjoyed the break--believe me, those summer blockbusters don't give ya one of those--rough on the bladder, I tell ya. But I digress! The proverbial storm is still brewing in the super world, and it's still focusing around our faithful hero Danny Newman. He's just starting to settle into the hero world, but he's got lots of choices to make--that is, if he can even get the hang of being a hero in the first place.

He slides off to the side of the stage as the drop comes up to reveal Danny and Wizard in the Ultra Penthouse, Danny standing in the middle as Wizard paces around him, examining him.

WIZARD

I'm so pleased you've decided to come talk to me, Danny!

DANNY

Well, I just wanted to get your advice on this whole hero thing.

WIZARD

Of course! You're already doing so well, my boy, but with just a little more work, you could really be Ultra material.

DANNY

Hey, I still don't think--

WIZARD

(Pressing a finger to Danny's lips)

Easy. Perhaps you're still uneasy about joining our little team... but even just being qualified would make you so much better. In fact, Ultra material simply means you'd be one of the best.

*****WIZARD SONG*****

****During his number, Wizard begins to lecture Danny on how to be "the best". Eventually, Mr. Z joins in, encouraging him.****

As the number concludes, an alarm beeps on Danny's watch.

DANNY

Oh no! I have an interview!

He begins to run offstage, and Mr. Z begins cackling.

MR. Z

You better run, kid! Your craaaazy life is calling!

*****ENSEMBLE NUMBER*****

****The following number chronicles Danny struggling to keep up in the midst of all of his different struggles and responsibilities, while both Sam and Alleykat begin to hint at their feelings for him, only adding to his dismay.****

BLACKOUT.

Act II, Scene 2

The stage is dark. In a corner, we see the Cabal sitting at a dimly lit table.

HONORS

Well, gentlemen, are we decided?

OBSIDIOUS

I believe we are. The heroes must be stopped at any cost.

TYRANT

I'm just impressed he recuperated so quickly, will he be ready?

OBSIDIOUS

I believe so. Just the fact that he survived provides us an element of surprise.

HONORS

Then let's make the preparations.

They stand and file out, the stage fading back to complete darkness. Suddenly, a lone spotlight falls on a figure who walks out to center stage. He looks up, and is revealed to be Emperor, clad in all black. Slowly, as dark, brooding chords are struck, he begins to sing.

Dead Doesn't Mean Forever

Emperor: Hello all, did you miss me?

Though I wasn't gone too long
You might ask how I'm back so quickly?
Well then, listen to my song

Dead doesn't mean forever
It only lasts a little while
Dead doesn't mean forever
The grave don't make the bad guys docile

While I'm pleased to be back in the land of the living
I can't help but feel
If it's not me doing the life-giving

Am I really at the wheel?

Emperor appears dismayed at this notion, and grows slightly angry.

Invisible hands guide the way
And we're characters
In some cosmic comic display
So forget about our hopes and fears

'Cause
Dead doesn't mean forever
It only lasts a little while
Dead doesn't mean forever
Too many fans would stay in denial

The music swells to a crescendo, then falls quiet. All is silent, except for Emperor, who slowly begins to sing a mellow, echoey-version of his signature scat.

Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada
Da da da

In some far off place, rhythm begins to play under his notes.

Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada
Da da da

All across the stage, a horde of villains begin to emerge slowly, chanting.

Badadadada datdadayadada	Villains:Ooh ooh ooh ooh
Badadadada datdadayadada	Ooh ooh ooh ooh
Badadadada datdadayadada	Ooh ooh ooh ooh
Da da da	Oh woah woah

Badadadada datdadayadada	Villains:Ooh ooh ooh ooh	V: Doesn't mean forever, doesn't mean for-
Badadadada datdadayadada	Ooh ooh ooh ooh	Doesn't mean

Badadadada datdadayadada

Ooh ooh ooh ooh

forever, doesn't
mean for-
Doesn't mean
forever, doesn't
mean for-

Dead doesn't mean forever!

As Emperor shouts this line, the entire stage is bathed in bright lights, and the villains break into an even wilder, zanier sounding version of the chorus.

Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada
Da da da
Da da da da

Emperor reemerges at the forefront, once again wearing familiar bright and flashy colors, as the villains form up into a chorus line.

Dead doesn't mean forever
It only lasts a little while
Dead doesn't mean forever
Cause we'll always be back
to make you smile

Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada
Da Da Da

Yes we'll always be back
Oh we'll always be back
Yes always and to suggest
That we could die would be a jest
We're always on that endless quest
We'll never get that final rest!
Because we're always
Always
Back to make you

Emperor dramatically draws out these last notes, the suddenly drops out, growing quieter as the chorus around him reaches a roar.

Smile

Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadadada
Dadadadada
Wow!

Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadada datdadayadada
Badadadadada
Dadadadada
Wow!

BLACKOUT.

Act II, Scene 3

Danny, as Freeze Frame, is hanging out with Sam in his apartment.

SAM

So, what's it like having to deal with a secret identity, huh?
That must be interesting.

DANNY

Uh, yeah, haha, it makes life a lot more complicated.

SAM

(Jotting on her notepad)
Fascinating.

DANNY

Well, hey, I've been thinking, and um, would you ever want to
meet somewhere more public? Like, coffee sometime?

SAM

Like--like a--

DANNY

Oh no, no, not *that*, just a... uhh, a friendly..

As the two struggle with words, Wizard rushes onto stage.

WIZARD

Da--*(Spotting Sam)* Freeze Frame, we've got a situation on our
hands.

SAM

Whoa! Wizard, with a situation?

DANNY

What is it, uh, sir?

WIZARD

Emperor is back, and his henchmen are staging a bank heist.

DANNY
He's back?

WIZARD
Happens all the time. "Dead never means forever," we always say
in the business.

SAM
Well if we can just finish up here--

WIZARD
No time, young lady. Danny, let's get a move on.

DANNY
Can't I just have another minute?

WIZARD
(Suddenly aggressive)
DON'T QUESTION M--
(Softening)
thissss opportunity! This is your big break, kid!

Danny looks at Sam.

DANNY
I'm sorry, Sam, I'll catch you around.

The two sprint offstage, leaving Sam by herself. She settles into a chair, looking forlorn. On the other half of the stage, we suddenly see Speed Demon and Alleykat training.

SPEED DEMON
You're looking really good!

ALLEYKAT
Huh. Thanks.

SPEED DEMON
I mean seriously! You're awesome.

ALLEYKAT

(Softening a little at the compliments)

Well, I dunno about that.

Behind them, Lone Wolffe walks onstage and taps Speed Demon on the shoulder.

LONE WOLFFE

Hey loverboy, Steel wants you.

ALLEYKAT

Gross, Wolffe.

SPEED DEMON

Ahaha yeah, what? We're just friends, obviously!

LONE WOLFFE

Forget it. He needs to talk to you. City's in danger again.

SPEED DEMON

(Excitedly to Alleykat)

This could be my big break!

ALLEYKAT

I can help t--

(But the pair is already out of earshot)

Ugh!

The two of them leave the stage as well. Alleykat sinks down on her corner of the stage, and then she and Sam begin to sing.

*****DUET*****

As the number ends, the two girls part ways offstage.

BLACKOUT.

Act II, Scene 4

Downtown, Danny is with the Ultras, locked in combat with Emperor's henchmen. As the battle begins to swing in their favor, the henchmen retreat offstage.

WIZARD

See, my boy? You're a natural!

DANNY

Ah, I wouldn't go that far.

WIZARD

I would! You keep running with us, and you really will be one of the best.

*****ULTRAS SONG*****

****In the following number, the Ultras continue to instruct Danny on how to "be the best", as they continue to score victories together, but at the same time, others in Danny's life lament his detachment. ****

The number ends, and we now see Danny training with Watters.

WATTERS

You've been spending plenty of time with the Ultras lately, I see.

DANNY

Yeah, and? Look how much better I'm getting.

WATTERS

You're just making quite a statement is all--and not one we agreed was good. Plus I'm sure your vigilante friends can't be too happy.

DANNY

You can't please everyone all the time.

WATTERS

Jeez, kid, will you listen to me?! I'm trying to help you!

DANNY

(Raising his own voice in retort)

Yeah? Well maybe I don't want your help anymore!

WATTERS

(Growing very irritated)

After all I've done for you...

DANNY

I think you've done quite enough, y-you... old fogey!

WATTERS

Watch your mouth, ya damn whippersnapper!

He visibly winces at his own age-exposing insult. Danny begins to storm off, to his alarm.

WATTERS

(Still upset but less angry)

You can't just leave now! Being a big shot and a hero are not synonymous--

At this, Danny wheels on him.

*****WATCH YOUR BACK REPRISE*****

****As Danny sings, he suddenly lashes out at the many other players in his life too, pushing them all away in a fit of rage.****

The number ends as Danny is left alone on stage, and then the lights come down.

Act II, Scene 5

In the sewers, Steel, Samurai, and other vigilantes are sneaking onstage. It is dark except for dim lighting on them.

STEEL

If our info is correct, Emperor's lair is down here in one of these tunnels.

SAMURAI

Do you really think Speed Demon was ready to lead the other team?

STEEL

Relax, he's got Wolffe with him.

SAMURAI

That's supposed to make me feel any better?

STEEL

He's a loose cannon, I'll give you that.

SAMURAI

And what about leaving Alleykat at HQ?

STEEL

You think she's ready for this kind of assignment?

SAMURAI

(Sighing)

I don't know. But she needs to feel ready. They all do. We just need our kids to be more...inspired

STEEL

I know. I thought Danny could help us. But it seems we're going to lose him to those Ultras after all.

VIGILANTE

Hey, sir! We've found something!

The lights come up as the party walks into a seemingly abandoned lair. At a rustling, they snap into action, and Photon springs out from behind them.

STEEL

You?

PHOTON

So, the vigilantes are in cahoots with the bad guys? Not surprising.

STEEL

In *cahoots*? Emperor tried to put a round through me! I outta-

SAMURAI

(Putting an arm on his shoulder)

Easy, hun.

(Looking around to everyone)

Cool your jets, boys.

(And to Photon)

We're looking for Emperor. Same as you, I suppose?

PHOTON

Well, yes. But I was under the impression that my team was the only one with access to this location.

STEEL

(Stepping forward)

As was I.

SAMURAI

Now what does that mean?

At a dramatic tremolo of drums, Mr. Z's voice fills the air.

MR. Z

That it's a trap! You heroes never learn.

He saunters downstage, much to the surprise of the heroes. He looks them all over.

MR. Z

No matter how good you heroes are at getting yourselves out of traps, ya never learn how to not fall for em. Pity.

He waves his hands, and music begins to play.

Right Where I Want You (Reprise)

Mr. Z: I must admit, I'm feeling satisfied
My carefully crafted plans are being realized
The careful web I've weaved around you now at last
Exactly as I foresaw is coming to pass

He begins to descend towards the heroes.

'Cause you're
Right where I want you
There's nothing you can do
Your worst dreams now all come true
You're right where I want you

He suddenly launches an attack. The heroes all jump in, but he begins to sidestep and incapacitate them with ease as an eerie instrumental of the song plays. As he roughly shoves Samurai to the edge of the stage, he begins to sing again.

I'll cut through ya with the swipe of my hand
I'll fight you all to the very last man
Though that won't take too long, as you can see
My trap has lead to my victory

The tempo slows as Steel runs at him and Mr. Z knocks him down, cornering him. Samurai gasps but is unable to get up.

'Cause you're
Right where I want you
There's nothing you can do
Your futile resistance is all but through

Photon charges from behind. However, Mr. Z casually turns and stops the hero by grabbing his balled fist.

MR. Z

(Grinning)
Nice try, hotshot.

As he stretches out the last notes and wrestles Photon's hand downwards, the stage is bathed in glowing lights.

You're right where I want you!

Boom.

There is a flash of blinding light and the crack of an explosion.

BLACKOUT.

Act II, Scene 6

The stage is bathed in darkness save for sparse white lighting. The full company is mourning the fallen heroes, though everyone is still divided among their designated groups. A chorus of mourners begins to sing.

Honor the Fallen

Chorus: Aaaah

Aaaah

Powered individuals are dead

Powered individuals are dead

Renowned heroes

With us no more

Now they're gone and dead

Honor the fallen (ooooh)

Honor the fallen (ooooh)

Honor the fallen (ooooh)

They fought for you (ooooh)

We see Lone Wolffe pacing in front of the Vigilantes.

Lone Wolffe: So it's come to this

I knew things were amiss

But murder seemed far across the line

But here we are just the same

And if our death's my enemy's aim

Then, by God, theirs is mine

Chorus: Honor the fallen (ooooh)

Honor the fallen (ooooh)

Honor the fallen (ooooh)

They fought for you (ooooh)

In the same fashion, Wizard is consoling the Ultras.

Wizard: My father always said to me

The world's a messy place

You shouldn't let it bog you down

Don't be rash, don't lose face.

But in the face of tragedy

I'll not sit idly by

I've got just one thing to say
And that is I--

Wizard turns, and a light behind him falls on Samurai, who lays unconscious on a gurney, as the rest of the stage darkens. He kneels beside her, softening.

I'm sorry
for your loss,
that this happened,
what it cost.
I wish I could take it all back.

Slowly, Wizard rises and begins to become more resolute, returning to the present reality with his team.

But that isn't what I get to say
I have to stand and face the day
I have to be in charge today
To lead the charge into the fray
Since we were hit we'll stand our ground
We're fighting back not standing down
'Cause now war is the only choice
So we cry attack and raise our voices
to

Lights fall on the entire company.

Chorus: Honor the fallen (ooooh)
Honor the fallen (ooooh)
Honor the fallen (ooooh)
What would they do (ooooh)

Honor the fallen
Honor the fallen
Oooooh

As the dirge grows softer and softer, mourners file off the stage, the lights growing dimmer as each group leaves. Finally, only Danny, Sam, Wizard, and a few of the Vigilantes are left.

DANNY

(Catching Wizard as he begins to exit)

What can I do?

WIZARD

Excuse me, what?

DANNY

Isn't there anything I can do to help?

WIZARD

You're too new to this stuff, kid. I'll handle it. Don't worry,
I'll let you know if I ever need you.

He walks off, and Sam cautiously approaches Danny.

SAM

(Approaching Danny)

Hey, Freeze Frame...

DANNY

(Turning in surprise)

Huh? Oh, hey.

SAM

I know these are tough times

DANNY

Yeah, no kidding.

SAM

Well, I just wanted to let you know...you know, if you need
someone in these times...

DANNY

Yeah? Well thanks for the offer, but I'm afraid I've got some
important hero business to attend to.

*He storms off. Sam sighs, but then begins to follow him, exiting
as well. Across stage, Speed Demon is talking to Alleykat.*

ALLEYKAT

They're not sure if Samurai is gonna make it.

SPEED DEMON

Hey, it's alright! I think she'll be fine. And hey, we've always got each other.

ALLEYKAT

I just wish Danny was here.

(SD visibly deflates at the remark)

But of course those stupid Ultras drug him off. And if you aren't careful Wolffe will do the same thing to you.

SPEED DEMON

I think he might do alright as a stand-in leader.

ALLEYKAT

I don't think I wanna stick around long enough to find out.

She too exits, leaving Speed Demon all alone. He wanders to the forefront of the stage, deeply sighing. Finally, he looks up and begins to sing. One by one, Alleykat, Sam, and Danny also rejoin him onstage in a quartet.

Why Does Love (Have to be so Complicated)

SD: Why does love have to be so complicated
Why does love have to be so hard to find
You'd think if we could
Choose who we loved
We'd all gain a little peace of mind

Why does love have to be so convoluted
Why does love have to spin you round and round
You lay eyes on them
And your head starts to swim
As your world gets turned upside down

But then the triangles and the missed hints
The drama and the childish secrets
All come creepin' in
But everyone's tunin' in
Because no one can get enough

Of this twisty turny romance stuff
But yet I gotta ask, oh
Yeah I really, really wanna know

Why does love have to be so very nebulous
Why does love have to drag on for the whole show
I guess if we all actin' real slick
And got everything we wanted right quick
There'd be no reason for you not to go

Alleykat: Why does love have to be so complicated

Sam: Why is love the thing we gotta find?

Both: Ya think you pick the right guys
Then they sock ya 'tween the eyes
It'll drive you right out of your mind

SD: Why does love

Alleykat: Why does love

Sam: Why does love

Danny: Why does love

All: Why does love have to be so out of our control

Why does love always kick you where the sun don't shine

Why does love

Why does love

Ah ah, ah ah

The others slowly trickle offstage, leaving Speed Demon to his lonesome once more.

SD: But even in the worst of times

We all just keep tryin'

'Cause then we just might find

That peace of mind

As he holds the last note, the lights come down.

Act II, Scene 7

Danny enters his apartment, worn down from the days happenings.

DANNY

Ugh, things are crazy out there.

Mr. Z emerges from a shadowy corner.

MR. Z

Rough day, huh?

DANNY

(Jumping)

Whoa! What are you doing here?

MR. Z

(Sauntering forward)

Just figured it'd be a good time to drop by, say hi, ya know?

DANNY

And why's that?

MR. Z

Oh, I dunno, looks like you've pushed all your friends away, the people you're with now are a bunch of jerks, and everything around you is going to hell. I'm about the only person with advice you can still come to.

DANNY

You're right, you're right. I don't know what went wrong.

MR. Z

There, there, kid, you didn't do anything wrong, now did you?

DANNY

I didn't think so! I just...tried to be the best hero I could be..

MR. Z

Yes...

DANNY

I...chased after everything I wanted, because I thought I could have it all--because you told me to!

MR. Z

Correct! You did *exactly* what I suggested.

DANNY

I did! I thought I did everything just right.

MR. Z

Oh, but you did!

DANNY

How? Steel and all them still *died*, Samurai isn't too far behind, my friends hate me, and Emperor's still out there--

MR. Z

Oh, Emperor? You mean

(taking on Emperor's voice)

"All about the bad guys, Badadadada datdadayadada, waddup-wow!"
that guy?

DANNY

Yeah, do you know him?

MR. Z

Bobby DeVito was a poor guy down on his luck. He needed a mentor, someone to trust...and so I offered him advice, advice which he took so strongly to heart that he was pretty much just my meat puppet even before I pulled his body out of the ground.

DANNY

What?

MR. Z

Oh, be humble Danny, you share me with a lot of people. My whispers found Emperor's ears, and his so-called masters, Wizard's, Lone Wolffe's...

DANNY

I thought you said I could trust you!

MR. Z

Of course I said that, that's what the bad guy always says!

He begins to sing.

Feels so Good (Bein' Bad)

Mr. Z: Open up your window it's a lovely day
To see what fire and brimstone can burn away
You think you know someone but that was a joke
'Cause now they're all up in smoke

Everyone's got those secret desires
The urge to shake things up and set fires
Steal kill and destroy
Play with the world like your broken toy
Whispers a voice in the night
And you cannot run, you cannot hide
There's no escaping that monster inside
Some get swept by the turning tide
And embrace that monster inside
And why do they listen? Well there's just one reason to be had
It feels so good bein' bad

It feels so good bein' bad
Why it's the best damn rush you ever had
Give into that secret you and stop being so sad
You'll feel much better when you're bad

The room around them suddenly begins to shift. Danny glances around in alarm.

MR. Z

Let's take a trip!

The set transforms into the Cabal's Hideout, where the three heads and many of their villain lackeys are lying about. They all react with alarm.

HONORS

What in the name of--?

MR. Z

Now these people are more my speed!

So here we are at last
Every actor unmasked
The show is coming to an end
And I gotta tell you my friend
Though you fight to do what's right
You'll succumb to that monster inside
--or die ahahaha!

It feels so good bein' bad
Why it's the best damn rush you ever had
When people start to fear how you're like when you get mad
Feels so good when you're bad

Now listen up, fleabags! This whole operation is under new
management! Everyone will do as I say.

HONORS

This is ridiculous!

MR. Z

I'm asking nicely.

HONORS

I'm not.

He brandishes a handgun, but Mr. Z reaches out and twists his hand, causing Honors to turn the gun on himself and fire. He drops to the ground, leaving everyone in stunned silence.

MR. Z

Alright everyone, let's hop to!
(Getting no response, he drops his cheery tone)
I said hop to!

OBSIDIOUS & TYRANT
(Snapping to attention)
Yes, your evilness!

As the villains scurry about, Mr. Z joyously launches back into song.

It feels so good bein' bad
And now these armies are mine to be had!
My secret's out, I'm feeling rad
Because I love being bad!

As he draws out the last note, Danny attempts to run offstage, but to his dismay, the entire company emerges from the wings, clad in all black, as the stage is bathed in red lighting, shifting more from the lair to a nightmarish landscape. Each exit he tries is blocked, trapping him in as Mr. Z leads the ensemble in dance.

As the dance ends, the company forms a giant chorus line.

Mr. Z: And on those dark and lonesome nights
You'll feel that pull from the dark side
Ooh! And this is where I get to say it: "we're not so different, you and I."

Company: Throw open the window it's a lovely day
To see what fire and brimstone can burn away
Ya thought ya knew me kid, but that was a joke
Cause now it's all up in smoooooke
Cause now it's all up in--

Mr. Z: You cannot run	Chorus: Ohhhh
Can'tcha see	Ahhhh
There's no escape from that	
Monster inside of me	Monster!
And I embrace it	Ahhhh
For the one reason I've had	Ahhhh
It feels so good	
It feels so good	Wadup-wow!
It feels so good	
Bein	
Ba--	Bad!
Ahahahahahahaha--bein' bad!	

As he sustains the last note and breaks into laughter, the rest of the company runs offstage, leaving only him and Danny with a few villains still plodding around in the background.

DANNY

What are you?

MR. Z

A being hellbent on destroying worlds. It's fun! Aw, don't look so afraid. I've been nothing but good to you, and it's cause I like you. In fact, I like you so much, I wanna make you my right-hand man!

(Extending a hand)

Whaddaya say?

DANNY

Partners? With you? Never!

He reaches for his watch, but Mr. Z snatches it off of him, throws it to the ground, and crushes it with his foot. Danny stares at it in horror.

MR. Z

I was afraid I'd have to do that. Oh well, onto bigger and better.

(Eying two henchmen)

You there!

(They come downstage)

I'm very busy, so will you two take care of this kid?

They begin to advance toward Danny, who scrambles to his feet and runs offstage with them in pursuit.

MR. Z

(Cackling and waving)

So long, kid! No hard feelings. Ahahahaha!

He warms up for one last belt.

It just feels too damn good

Bein

Bad!

BLACKOUT.

Act II, Scene 8

In the city, the Ultras and the Vigilantes (minus Alleykat, Samurai, the younger members, and the deceased) are toe-to-toe, all braced for a fight. Wizard is trying to keep peace as Lone Wolffe and some fellow members jeer at him.

Downstage right, Sam rushes in, takes a look at the situation, and begins to leave.

SAM

(Stopping and talking to some unseen newscaster)

Wait, me? There's no one else nearby?

(Getting an inaudible response, she sighs and steadies herself)

This is Samantha Turner, reporting in from Cityville Square. It appears tensions between some heroes may be about to boil over.

Let's take a look.

*****CIVIL WAR SONG*****

******In the course of the number, Speed Demon and Lone Wolffe trade jabs with Wizard until the heroes all finally let loose at each other. While the battle ramps up, Alleykat slips on stage and grabs Speed Demon, who exits with her.******

Act II, Scene 9

The lights come up in the Vigilantes' HQ, with Danny lying on a bed. He bolts upright to see Speed Demon, Alleykat, and Watters around him.

DANNY

Oh, what happened?

WATTERS

These two kiddos saw a bunch of villains gathering on the fringes of the city. They told me, I went lookin' for you, and found a couple of baddies beating the crap out of you. You lost your watch, it looks like.

DANNY

It was destroyed by a thing called Mr. Z. He's here to destroy us all, and I trusted him.

(Looking from each one of them)

I pushed you all away and only had him to watch my back and look what happened. Where is everyone else?

SPEED DEMON

Fighting. Everyone finally snapped.

ALLEYKAT

If your guy is starting doomsday, this would be an excellent window.

(Danny groans)

Only ones left here are the Vigilantes Wolfe didn't seem to think were ready.

Behind them, a number of heroes, looking ragtag even by Vigilante standards, emerge. Samurai walks onstage with an obvious limp.

SAMURAI

Don't forget about me.

DANNY

This is all we have? To go up against an army of bad guys?

Everyone nods forlornly. Danny blanches and staggers forward. The space around him dims, with a spotlight on him. He begins to sing a sad lament.

New Kid (Reprise)

Danny: New kid, what a mess
New kid, they've all but won
New kid, and it's all my fault
Just look around and see what you've done

I thought I was some chosen one
Lived my days up in the sun
But now I'm back down
Just some new kid in town
I left my friends behind in the dirt
I messed up and people got hurt
'Cause I thought I was some superhero holy grail
But I'm just the kid that failed

Speed Demon walks behind him and claps a hand on his shoulder.

SPEED DEMON

Hey man, pick yourself up. We all make mistakes.

ALLEYKAT

Yeah, it's what we do after 'em that counts.

WATTERS

You still have your opportunity to bring people together, kid.

DANNY

How? All the heavies are out there, about to be surrounded and trapped. I thought I was one of them, but turns out I'm not. And now all we have are a bunch of--

SPEED DEMON

A bunch of what? B-list heroes? Sidekicks? Listen, man, I was only out there 'cause I wanted to suck up to Lone Wolffe, and that really made me way more of a lackey than I had ever been

before that. All you gotta do to be a top-tier hero is
to...well...be a hero just like anyone else!

DANNY

I think we're a little past that point.

SPEED DEMON

No way, dude!

He begins to sing, slowly at first.

*More than Sidekicks

SD: So everything seems dark
We may have lost today
We're all out of heroes
And there's no other way
But hold on just a minute.

He begins to speed up, growing more impassioned.

Seems to be something you're forgettin'
'Cause how does that help the rap we're gettin'
It's our time to stand, but you don't expect us too?
Well here's a little reminder for you

We're more than sidekicks
We're not just little helper friends
We all got our own stories
And they go on long after this one ends
We may be all that's left,
But that's still an awful lot
So let's pull ourselves together
And give it all we've got

Now he begins to pace around stage.

I'm not a sidekick
I'm not helpless without
Some super mentor
I'm not gonna sit this out

Alleykat, who is very receptive to this message, stands and joins in.

AK: I'm not content to ride the bench
When now's our time to stand

Both: So let's face this thing together,
All of us hand-in-hand

At this, Speed Demon sticks out his hand. Alleykat eyes it for a moment before taking it. The rest of the young Vigilantes launch into song.

Chorus: We're more than sidekicks
We're not just bratty wards
We'll swoop in and save the day
All of our own accord
We may be all that's left
But that's still an awful lot
So we'll pull ourselves together
Give everything we've got

The music slows as the chorus circles Danny, while his friends work to convince him.

SD: So people try to put you down
'Cause they're afraid of who you are
You never need to listen to them
To be a superstar

Watters: You're your own hero kid
That's all that you can be

Samurai: But that's what bein' a hero's about
And that's enough for me!

Chorus: You're more than a sidekick
And you haven't let us down
But it's your time to shine man
Oh Danny we need you now

SD: We're all that you have
But that's still an awful lot
So pull yourself together
And show us what you've got

Danny finally casts off his dejectedness and jumps in.

Danny: I'm more than a sidekick

Chorus: More, more than a sidekick
More, more than a sidekick

SPEED DEMON

Holy exclamation--I mean, wow! Now you've got it!

The group launches into a tap number. As they carry on, elements of the "hero dream" Mr.Z gave Danny manifest in reality. As the chorus forms a line, they are all donned in glamorous, "legit" costumes.

SD: We're more than sidekicks

Chorus: More than sidekicks

SD: We're more than sidekicks

Chorus: More than sidekicks

Speed Demon links arms with Danny as they walk in time with the kick line behind them.

SD/Danny: We're not just kid wonders
We're not just super friends
We've got our own stories
That go long after this one ends!

SD: We may be all that's left,
But that's still an awful lot
So let's pull ourselves together
And give it all we've got

We're more than sidekicks

Danny: More than sidekicks

Both: More than sidekicks
We're heroes

Chorus: Heroes!

BLACKOUT.

Act II, Scene 10

Downtown, the rest of the heroes are still locked in combat. A rumbling causes them to all stop and look around. Villains emerge from every corner of the stage, with Mr. Z wheeling in a giant, complicated contraption.

MR. Z

Behold, you puny heroes! While you were all busy pounding each other, my new henchmen have been busy. You're all surrounded.

LONE WOLFFE

Who the hell are you?

MR. Z

I'm the guy who's about to blow your world away with this extremely overly-complicated device doohickey.

WIZARD

Always the doohickeys. Can't you guys ever make something without buttons and wires?

MR. Z

Where's the fun in that? Now excuse me for being so trite but I just *have* to monologue.

(Clearing throat)

You see, my world is a barren wasteland. I hated it there. And I hated knowing other people were better off. So my life goal has been to find worlds like yours, tip them off balance, and then make them like my own. It's horrible there. But don't take my word for it, let's open up the gate!

He presses a button, and a countdown for t-minus ten minutes begins.

MR. Z

Mustn't ever forget the countdown. Ahahaha!

Suddenly, at the tone of a triumphant note, Danny and his ragtag squad of heroes burst onstage.

SPEED DEMON

Hey now, don't have all the fun without us.

ALLEYKAT

How long have you been holding onto that one?

MR. Z

Well, well, well, if it isn't little Freeze Frame and his band of miscreants.

(Looking at each member of the group)

An old cynic, a wounded mother figure, a motormouth sidekick, and a little girl and a couple of her kid friends that don't belong in the business. Is that all you got?

DANNY

Not quite.

(Looking at the surrounded Vigilantes and Ultras)

Guys, this prick here is responsible for our friends dying. He's responsible for a lot of our troubles. So let's stop throttling each other and kick their rears!

Everyone is silent. Lone Wolffe slowly turns to Wizard.

LONE WOLFFE

I hope you know I still hate your pretentious guts.

WIZARD

I wouldn't expect any less. To battle!

All the heroes give up a rallying cry, and another choreographed dance-fight begins. As the fight intensifies, Danny makes his way toward Mr. Z.

DANNY

Step away from the machine!

MR. Z

Oh, Danny boy, you think I'm scared of you? You're hilarious.

There is a flash of light as he waves his hands, and then a thunderclap. When the lights return to normal, though, it is revealed Lone Wolffe jumped in front of Danny, and the former sinks to his knees, but not before letting off rounds at Mr. Z, who flails backward.

MR. Z

Ah! C'mon, seriously?

LONE WOLFFE

(Sputtering)

Huh. Didn't see that coming.

DANNY

Wolffe!

WOLFFE

(Struggling to get to his feet)

So that's what saving people feels like. Guess maybe I was cut out for this after all.

Danny begins to move towards Wolffe, but Mr. Z cuts him off, putting a wounded Wolffe into a chokehold.

MR. Z

(Irritation beginning to poke through in his overly cheery tone)

Ok, this has gone on long enough! I've had it with you, Danny Newman, and all your hero friends. You won't be alive to see it, but what I do to Wolfie here will be exactly what happens to all of them!

DANNY

(Panicked, though anger creeps through in his own tone)

Stop it!

WOLFFE

(Barely struggling)

It's ok kid. Just get to that machine. You can still do it.

DANNY

No, I can't! I can't even--

(His breath catches)
--I can't even save you!

WOLFFE
It's alright kid. Just focus.

MR. Z
Focus? Oh, this is rich!

DANNY
It doesn't matter! He destroyed my watch! I can't do anything.

WOLFFE
This isn't a story about some old watch, kid. It's about you.
Just focus. You got this.

MR. Z
(Cackling)
Oh, you really think so? He's nothing now! No one to help him,
no magic watch--you're not just not a hero kid, you're not even
super! And your time's UP!

He raises his hand to strike Wolffe, but Danny balls his fists,
squeezes his eyes shut, and then suddenly releases.

DANNY
NO!

Time freezes, though Mr. Z is struggling and managing to move
very slowly.

DANNY
(Suddenly calmer)
I don't think that's your call to make.

MR. Z
(Enraged, but even more surprised)
Wha-what? How?

DANNY

There's probably some message here about how the power was inside me all along, but I'll worry about that one later.

As Mr. Z struggles, Danny reaches out and pulls Wolfe from him, then pushes him backwards until he slips and falls onto the machine. There's a blinding flash of light, and then, we see the machine being dragged offstage as wind whips around. Everyone stops to observe.

MR. Z

(Struggling to get up off of it)

You fool! You just opened the gate sooner!

He stumbles forward, but then pitches face first and lands on the ground. He throws a terrified glance back at the machine, still slowly heading offstage, and realizes that he too is being dragged with it (Cables would be best for the "dragging effect").

DANNY

It looks like the only one headed back to your home is you, Mr. Z.

MR. Z

(For once, any notes of joy are gone from his voice)

No, you don't understand! It's awful back there!

DANNY

So you told us.

MR. Z

I don't wanna go back! Please! I'll give you anything! Anything you desire!

DANNY

I think you've given us all quite enough.

As Mr. Z is dragged further and further away, the chorus begins to chant.

Chorus: Bum bum bum bum bum bum bum bum

Bum bum bum bum bum bum bum bum
Bum bum bum bum bum bum bum bum

You cannot run
You cannot hide

MR. Z

No! Help me kid!

Bum bum bum bum bum bum bum bum
Bum bum bum bum bum bum bum bum

There's no escaping...
A world beyond
your wildest dreams

Bum bum bum bum bum bum bum bum
Bum bum bum bum bum bum bum bum
Bum bum bum bum bum bum bum bum
Bum bum bum bum bum bum bum bum

Trust me
So this is what you get
Now that your fun has been had
Hope you had fun
Bein'

MR. Z

I don't wanna go back! I don't wanna be bad anymore!

BAD!

MR. Z

NOOOOOOOO!

*As he screams and the chorus reaches a wail, he finally slips
offstage. The music crescendos.*

BLACKOUT.

Act II, Scene 11

When the lights come back up, the remaining heroes are alone in the City square.

WIZARD

Well...this has been an adventure.

SAMURAI

A teaching moment, I hope?

WIZARD

What could it possibly--yes, yes I suppose you're right. I suppose my team has acted out of intentions not quite great.

SPEED DEMON

So did we.

(Looking at Alleykat)

Well, I can only speak for myself. Sorry.

Sam runs on stage.

SAM

Whoa, that was so cool! You were amazing out there, Freeze Frame! You saved the city.

DANNY

(Nodding)

Huh. I guess I did. *(Looking at Sam)* Hey, Sam *(clearing his throat and lowering his voice an octave)* I mean, uh, Sam, right? I'm sorry for pushing you away.

He looks to Watters, then his Vigilante friends.

DANNY

And you. And all you guys.

SPEED DEMON

Don't worry about it. Isn't a good story without some ups and downs.

SAM

And this is one heckuva good story.

WATTERS

A good origin story, kid.

DANNY

But everything's still a mess. A few sorries won't even begin to help pick up any pieces.

WATTERS

So what? There's always another issue, always a sequel. Just get started now.

Danny begins to nod slowly, and then starts to sing. All of the heroes eventually join in, all reconciling with each other and apologizing, ultimately coming closer together.

*****RECONCILIATION SONG*****

******The lights go down on a chord, and the stage is dark for a moment. Then, they come back up on Danny again, with the square already looking much nicer again. He begins to sing triumphantly, and the other character join him one by one until the entire chorus is singing, wrapping everything up nicely. They hit a final chord, and the curtain comes down.******

*****HERO REPRISE AND FINALE*****

END.