

Captain Phantasm vs. the Nefarious Dr. Noir: A Melodramatic Serial in Three Acts

by

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MAJOR CHARACTERS

CAPTAIN PHANTASM:	A costumed hero trained in the mysterious and inscrutable fighting techniques of the Orient who wages a tireless battle against the forces of evil with his quick wits, his fists of justice, and his penchant for long, rambling, metaphor-laden speeches. His secret identity is KNOX HENDERSON, a young, idealistic detective with the Metroville City Police Department..
PRETTY PERFECT:	The intrepid and beautiful reporter for the Metroville City Herald who will stop at nothing to break the big story. She's got moxie, spunk, and chutzpah out the yin-yang, and a reporter's intuition for trouble. Her heart belongs to CAPTAIN PHANTASM.
DR. NOIR:	A nefarious criminal mastermind with impeccable fashion sense and a melodramatic flair. From his secret lair in the Pink Pussycat Lounge, he is hatching a scheme so diabolical and fiendish that it may finally bring him the wealth and infamy he so desperately craves. Plus, he's French.
MITTENS, FLUFFY:	When they're not schlepping drinks at the Pink Pussycat Lounge, these two lovely but deadly vixens are carrying out DR. NOIR'S fiendish schemes. They wear pink, slinky cat outfits, complete with ears and tails. Meow!
HARRY FINSTER:	A beleaguered detective with the Metroville City Police Department who is partnered with KNOX HENDERSON. Little does anyone realize that he is corrupt, and secretly in league with DR. NOIR.
THE PROFESSOR:	A loveable but slightly mad scientist and friend of CAPTAIN PHANTASM. He is well versed in the fields of... Science!
SUNNY POLITO:	The major crime kingpin in Metroville City. She is totally unflappable. Seriously. This woman cannot be flapped.
FRANKIE, JOHNNY:	SUNNY POLITO'S two main button men. JOHNNY is the muscle, while FRANKIE is the smarter of the two. Which isn't saying much.
THE EMCEE:	Our host for the evening, he wears a suit and bowtie and sports greased back hair and a pencil-thin mustache. He has a pompous, Orson Wells air about him.

THERE ARE NO SMALL PARTS...

OFFICER SMALLBERRY, PIANO PLAYER, HOODLUM #1, HOODLUM #2, HOODLUM #3, GANGSTER #1, GANGSTER #2, OFFICER BIGBOOTE

SCENE DESCRIPTIONS

In addition to the main stage, there should be a side stage where the EMCEE can deliver his expository narration during the play.

ACT I

Scene 1

Chemical Plant: Low lit. A table holds various beakers, bottles, and flasks.

Scene 2

Pink Pussycat Lounge: Various tables and chairs. A neon sign in the background displays the name. The piano player should be spotlighted as well.

Scene 3

The Professor's Lab: Well lit. A table sits to one side, covered with a prodigious number of beakers, test tubes, and various scientific equipment. There is also a single wooden chair. In the background are an open window and a telephone.

ACT II

Scene 1

The Professor's Lab

Scene 2

Pretty's Apartment: A very simple set, very minimalist. In the foreground is a small table with a phone and a vase.

Scene 3

Various Gritty Streets: Foreground, so very minimalist. Possibly just a streetlamp and a spotlight.

Scene 4

Finster's Car: Car set (with grill and headlights), and four chairs set up to represent seats. Background screen shows footage of moving road.

Scene 5

Pink Pussycat Lounge

ACT III

Scene 1

Pink Pussycat Lounge

Scene 2

Metroville City Reservoir: The interior of the water plant. In the foreground is a large pipe.

Scene 3

Top of the Dam: A tier or platform, with a small safety rail running the length of the stage.

INTRODUCTION

(On center stage is an old-fashioned microphone with the letters KPST visible on it. The EMCEE comes out and speaks in a cultured, yet smarmy voice.)

EMCEE

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to another exciting, pulse-pounding episode of Mystery Adventure Time Theater Hour on Radio KPST. I'm your host, Wink Walters, coming to you live from the luxurious auditorium of the [THEATRE NAME] in beautiful [CITY/ NEIGHBORHOOD NAME].

Tonight's program will begin after a short musical prelude, brought to you by Sophisticate Cigarettes and by Auntie Lou's Quality Homestyle All Purpose Flour, now with 30% fewer mites and weevils.

But first, let's take this opportunity to recognize tonight's tickler of the ivories extraordinaire, [NAME OF PIANO PLAYER].

(Gestures to PIANO PLAYER)

And now, I would like to invite each and every one of you, without exception, to join us in our sing-along. Our first song tonight is that toe-tappin' number, *Three Little Fishes*.

(Lead the crowd in a rousing rendition of Three Little Fishes)

Ah, yes. Boop boop diddum daddum waddum, choo. Those words are as true today as they were when they were written in 1939. The next song in tonight's parade of audience participation is a little ditty guaranteed to brighten up your day. Please join me in a rousing rendition of *You Are My Sunshine*.

(Make 'em SING, dammit!

Thank you. This concludes the sing-along portion of our program. Our story will begin in just a moment. But first...

Tonight's tale of two-fisted adventure and shocking intrigue is what we call "a melodrama." Every melodrama has a hero, whose daring deeds are heralded by stirring music, such as this.

(Pause as PIANO PLAYER plays heroic music)

When you hear this melody, lend your support to the hero's endeavors by shouting like this. "Hooray!"

(Lead the crowd in a shout of "Hooray!")

And of course, every hero needs a damsel to rescue again and again when she inevitably finds herself in yet another perilous situation brought about by her insatiable curiosity and poor sense of judgment. When you hear this haunting, lovely melody...

(Pause to let the PIANO PLAYER play the sad, sappy music)

Show your support for the poor damsel by sighing like this. "Sigh."

(Lead the crowd in a sigh)

And finally, every hero must have a villain. A nemesis. A vile avatar of wickedness and depravity, whose appearance will always be accompanied by this sinister music.

(Pause as PIANO PLAYER plays villainous music)

When you hear it playing, let that foul malefactor know you disapprove by shouting "Boo! Hiss!"

(Lead the crowd in some quality booing and hissing)

And now, Captain Phantasm! Orphaned as a child in the Himalayas when his paleontologist parents were devoured by spider monkeys, Captain Phantasm was raised by mystic monks who

trained him in the inscrutable arts of the Orient. Yes, Captain Phantasm, disguised as Knox Henderson, a young and idealistic detective with the Metroville City Police Department, fights a never ending battle against evildoers with his heightened catlike reflexes, his uncanny intellect, and his mighty fists of justice.

So kids! Gather round and set your decoder rings on “adventure” as Captain Phantasm meets... the Nefarious Dr. Noir!

(At this point, EMCEE makes his way over to the side stage. A spotlight falls on him, leaving the rest of the stage in darkness.)

Tonight’s story begins at the Metroville City Chemical Plant. It’s the wee hours of the morning, and there’s nobody there except for the security guards. But what’s this? Two hoodlums, obviously up to no good, are surreptitiously making their way through the darkness. Let’s go there now...

(Blackout)

ACT I

Scene 1

(We're in a low lit chemical plant. FRANKIE and JOHNNY are making their way through the dimness with a flashlight. They are dressed like traditional 30s-era gangsters, and are conversing quietly amongst themselves.

Their dialog is machine-gun rapid, with no breaks in between. They frequently talk over one another and occasionally in unison.)

FRANKIE

Well, Johnny, we sure made short work of those guards.

JOHNNY

Ya think?

FRANKIE

Yeah, I think.

JOHNNY

I still say we shoulda moiderized them.

FRANKIE

Moiderized them?

JOHNNY

Yeah, moiderized them! Did I stutter?

FRANKIE

We ain't whacking nobody, ya dumb bunny. We got our orders.

JOHNNY

Orders, schmorders.

FRANKIE

Shut your head or I'll schmorders you. Boss said he didn't want no unnecessary stiff.

JOHNNY

I didn't take this job just so's we could play footsie.

FRANKIE

Boss said...

JOHNNY

Boss said... boss said... I swear, ya keep playin' that same tune...

FRANKIE

Watch your mouth, palooka.

(Both make threatening fists and speak in unison)

FRANKIE, JOHNNY

(In unison)

Why I oughta pound you!

FRANKIE

Boss said to nick the stuff and dust out. So quit your yapping and get to looking before the sun comes up.

JOHNNY

Okay, okay.

(They both start searching the bottles and flasks on the table. After a few seconds, Johnny stops and turns to Frankie.)

JOHNNY

Uh, what was we looking for again?

FRANKIE

Ya dumb bunny. We're supposed to grab the... um... hydro... di... oxi... mono...

(He pulls a piece of paper out of his pocket, reads it on the sly, and then puts it back)

The Isotonium. Yeah, that's the ticket.

JOHNNY

Oh, yeah.

(Beat)

What is that again?

FRANKIE

Geez, why do the pretty ones have to be so dumb? It's a chemical, you palooka!

JOHNNY

So what does it do?

FRANKIE

It... um... you wouldn't understand. You don't know nothing about chemical science.

JOHNNY

I know what'll happen if we mix my fist with your face.

(Both make threatening fists and speak in unison)

FRANKIE, JOHNNY

(In unison)

Why I oughta pound you!

(They root through the bottles and flasks on the table. We hear sirens in the distance.)

FRANKIE

Light a fire under your buns, Johnny. The fuzz is on the way.

(They keep looking until Johnny finds one that's clearly labeled.)

JOHNNY

Is this it?

FRANKIE

That's the ticket. Let's blow this joint.

CAPTAIN PHANTASM

(Off stage)

The only joint you reprobates will be blowing is jail!

(Awkward pause)

Um, into!

(Johnny and Frankie pull out their guns and look around nervously.)

FRANKIE

Who said that?

(CAPTAIN PHANTASM rushes onstage dramatically and stands with his hands on his hips in a heroic pose.)

JOHNNY

It's Captain Phantasm!

FRANKIE

And his mighty fists of justice!

CAPTAIN PHANTASM

The same! Surrender now, you misguided miscreants, or prepare to sample an entree from the buffet table of justice, along with several side items of...

FRANKIE

Get him, Johnny!

JOHNNY

Eat hot lead, Captain Fancypants!

CAPTAIN PHANTASM

(Gestures and shouts dramatically)

Speed of the Cheetah!

(Strobe light effect. FRANKIE and JOHNNY begin moving more slowly as CAPTAIN PHANTASM races around them. FRANKIE and JOHNNY open fire, but CAPTAIN PHANTASM easily dodges the bullets. When their guns are empty, CAPTAIN PHANTASM charges them, knocks the guns from their hands, and punches them out. CAPTAIN PHANTASM makes another gesture, and time returns to normal. FRANKIE and JOHNNY fall to the ground, unconscious. CAPTAIN PHANTASM stands triumphantly over the defeated criminals. He takes the vial of Isotonium from them and holds it up to study it. FINSTER and OFFICER SMALLBERRY enter.)

FINSTER

See, kid? Told you there was no need to hurry. If we wait long enough, the Captain here will show up and do our job for us.

(Looks around, then checks his watch)

Where the Sam Moon is Detective Henderson? I swear, that boy would be late to his own funeral.

CAPTAIN PHANTASM

(Tucks the vial into a pocket.)

Ah, I see Metroville City's Finest has arrived on the scene. Good evening, Detective Finster. Officer Smallberry.

OFFICER SMALLBERRY

Captain Phantasm!

CAPTAIN PHANTASM

The same!

FINSTER

Yeah, whatever. What's going on here?

CAPTAIN PHANTASM

I have apprehended these two wrongdoers in the midst of their larcenous endeavors, namely the burglary of...

FINSTER

Yeah, yeah. We got it covered from here. Why don't you go hassle some jaywalkers or something?

(PRETTY enters, but is restrained by OFFICER SMALLBERRY.)

PRETTY

Get your mitts off me, flatfoot! Don't you know who I am?

FINSTER

Oh great. Just what we need.

CAPTAIN PHANTASM

Ah, Pretty Perfect. Award-winning reporter for the Metroville City Herald.

FINSTER

Yeah, we all know who she is, genius.

(Sighs)

Might as well go ahead and let her through.

PRETTY

(Flirting)

Hiya, Captain Phantasm.

(Glances around)

So, where's your partner, Finster? You didn't lose another one, did you?

FINSTER

Not yet. But if I have to stand around here waiting much longer, I'm gonna shoot him myself.

CAPTAIN PHANTASM

Oh! Um...

(Urgently and dramatically)

Somewhere in this city, justice cries out for help. And I must heed the call. Farewell!

(CAPTAIN PHANTASM exits with a flourish.)

PRETTY

(Sighs)

What a guy.

(To Finster)

So, spill, Detective. What's the story on these two gorillas?

FINSTER

Caught 'em in the act, burglarizing the place. They put up a ruckus, but I managed to take 'em down. Was in the process of reading them their rights when Captain Underpants showed up...

OFFICER SMALLBERRY

(Interrupting)

But I thought Captain Phantasm apprehended the suspects. Didn't you say if we waited around long enough, he'd do our job for us?

(PRETTY begins scribbling furiously in her pad.)

FINSTER

(Annoyed)

Shouldn't you be looking for clues or something?

OFFICER SMALLBERRY

Yes, Detective.

(OFFICER SMALLBERRY begins combing the crime scene as FINSTER resumes his story.)

FINSTER

So, where was I? Oh, yeah... I had just single-handedly nabbed the perps when Captain...

(CAPTAIN PHANTASM rushes onstage in the guise of KNOX HENDERSON, straightening his clothes and smoothing his hair.)

KNOX

Hey, Harry. Sorry I'm late.

(Shyly)

Morning, Miss Perfect. Pleasure to see you.

FINSTER

So what was it this time, Henderson? Missed your trolley? Sick grandmother? Out shopping for a new dress?

KNOX

Well, actually, my grandmother *was* feeling kind of...

FINSTER

(Interrupting)

Blah, blah, blah... Long story short. Why don't you stop flapping your gums and earn that Metroville City paycheck?

KNOX

Hey, congrats on winning that Peabody Award, Miss Perfect. I saw your picture in the paper this morning! You looked real nice.

PRETTY

You really think so?

(Looks offstage, wistfully)
I wish Captain Phantasm would notice.

KNOX
(Quietly, and even more wistfully)
I noticed...

PRETTY
What?

KNOX
Oh, um... so, what brings you here, Miss Perfect? You think there's a story?

FINSTER
Good question. Since when does an "award-winning reporter" care about some nickel and dime heist at a chemical plant?

PRETTY
Since this is the fifth chemical plant to be robbed this month. Not exactly the normal digs for lowlifes like these guys. So any idea what they're after?

FINSTER
No idea.

KNOX
I'm pretty sure they work for Sunny Polito.

PRETTY
(Writing)
Sunny Polito.

KNOX
Yeah, started off as a cigarette girl, but clawed her way up to the position of number one crime boss in Metroville City.

PRETTY
I know. I covered the story on her mistrial last year. So, what were they after?

KNOX
We caught them red-handed with this.

(KNOX holds up the vial of Isotonium.)

FINSTER
Hey! Where'd you get that?

(FINSTER storms over and snatches the vial from KNOX.)

FINSTER (cont'd)
Gimme that!

PRETTY
Isotonium? What would these guys...

FINSTER
That's enough, kid. You tell this dame too much and it'll be on the front page before we begin our investigation.

KNOX

Aw, come on, Harry. We're all good guys here, right?

(Beat)

Hey, I know someone who might be able to shed a little light on this investigation.

PRETTY

You mean... the Professor?

KNOX

Yeah. He knows this science mumbo jumbo backwards and forwards.

PRETTY

Okay. Let's go see him, shake the tree a little, and see what falls out.

FINSTER

That's a good idea. Why don't you kids go follow up on that lead. I'll wrap things up here.

PRETTY

I gotta run by the Herald first and check in with the chief. I'll meet you at the Professor's lab.

KNOX

Okay. We'll let you know what we find out, Harry.

(KNOX and PRETTY exit. FRANKIE and JOHNNY start to wake up, and OFFICER SMALLBERRY draws his gun.)

FINSTER

Don't worry, kid. These guys aren't going anywhere. Let me see your gun for a second.

OFFICER SMALLBERRY

Sure, detective.

(OFFICER SMALLBERRY hands the gun over to FINSTER, who examines it.)

FINSTER

Sorry about this, kid.

(FINSTER shoots OFFICER SMALLBERRY dead, then walks over to FRANKIE and JOHNNY.)

FINSTER

Okay, you palookas. On your feet.

FRANKIE

What... what's going on here? What are you doing?

FINSTER

Cleaning up the mess you idiots made.

(FINSTER hands JOHNNY the vial.)

FINSTER (cont'd)

Make sure this gets to Sunny Polito. Got it?

JOHNNY

Sure. Got it.

FINSTER

Oh, and one more thing. I can't have the brass thinking I just let you two escape, so...

(FINSTER hands the gun to FRANKIE.)

FINSTER (cont'd)

Make it look good.

FRANKIE

Yeah, okay. My pleasure, detective.

(FRANKIE points the gun. The lights go out, and we hear a LOUD gunshot.)

Scene 2

(The spotlight falls on the EMCEE, who is standing on the side stage with the microphone.)

EMCEE

We'll return to Captain Phantasm vs. the Nefarious Dr. Noir in just a moment, but first, a word from our sponsor – Sophisticate Cigarettes. Yes, Sophisticate Cigarettes, the cigarette that provides aristocratic taste at bourgeois prices. Whether you're young or old, you'll always look stylish and... yes, sophisticated with a Sophisticate Cigarette between your lips. Ladies, what better way to please your man after a hard day at the office than to meet him at the door with his slippers, his robe, and a Sophisticate Cigarette? Sophisticate Cigarettes... now with asbestos to prevent lung fever.

And now, back to the show.

We find ourselves at the Pink Pussycat Lounge, a seedy dive located on the Metroville City waterfront. But there is much more to this speakeasy than meets the eye, because unknown to the denizens of Metroville City, this den of iniquity also serves as the secret headquarters of the nefarious Dr. Noir, who is at this moment hatching yet another devious plan. Let's go there now...

(The spotlight goes out, and the lights come up. We're in a nightclub in the middle of the day. There are no customers, just empty tables. A neon sign declares this place the Pink Pussycat Lounge. The PIANO PLAYER is playing something jazzy in the background. The music starts off quiet, but grows louder very gradually as the scene progresses. Aside from the piano player, the only other occupants are DR. NOIR, who sits at one of the tables, and MITTENS and FLUFFY, who lounge about nonchalantly, playing cards. MITTENS is shuffling the deck.)

MITTENS

Okay, the name of the game is Scandinavia Beaver Cheese with a Blind Double Duck Slap.

(MITTENS starts to deal the cards.)

FLUFFY

Hey, wait! That's not even a real game!

DR. NOIR

Do you girls mind? I'm trying to hatch a devious plan here!

MITTENS, FLUFFY

(In unison)

Sorry, Dr. Noir.

(DR. NOIR sighs and shakes his head.)

DR. NOIR

I hate this stupid nightclub. A super villain of my high caliber should have a better secret headquarters, like in a cave or... or a dormant volcano! Imagine, an elaborate network of tunnels guarded by ninjas or... robots or... or... ninja robots!

(MITTENS and FLUFFY have heard this speech many times before. While DR. NOIR rambles on, they buff their nails and occasionally responds with a bored "Yes, Doctor.")

DR. NOIR (cont'd)

And a large command center, where I could monitor everything from my big, black chair with buttons...

Buttons, Doctor? FLUFFY

Yes, buttons. DR. NOIR

Buttons for what, Doctor? MITTENS

I don't know. Trap doors or... I don't know. Buttons are just intimidating, you know? DR. NOIR

(In unison) MITTENS, FLUFFY

Yes, Doctor.

(SUNNY POLITO, FRANKIE, and JOHNNY enter. MITTENS and FLUFFY leap to their feet and block their way.)

Doctor, Sunny Polito is here to see you. FLUFFY

(Sighs) DR. NOIR

I know. You see, if I had a big command chair, I could turn around slowly now and it would be... er...

Dramatic, doctor? MITTENS

Exactly! Dramatic. DR. NOIR

(Beat)

Let them in, girls.

(FLUFFY and MITTENS step aside. SUNNY, FRANKIE, and JOHNNY all approach DR. NOIR. The piano playing is quite loud by this point.)

Greetings and felicitations, Dr. Noir. My associates have... SUNNY

(To the PIANO PLAYER) DR. NOIR

Do you mind?! (The piano plays quietly again.)

You were saying, Sunny? DR. NOIR

Yeah, my associates have ascertained the substanceses that you requested at your bequest. SUNNY

(DR. NOIR nods towards MITTENS. She walks over and takes the chemical from SUNNY, then hands it to DR. NOIR.)

DR. NOIR

So, how did things go at the chemical plant, Sunny? Any... unforeseen difficulties?

SUNNY

No, sir. The caper went down like clockwork, Doc. The plan was impeccable.

DR. NOIR

Really? Well, this must be some new use of the word "impeccable" of which I was unaware. Perhaps you can explain why your "impeccable" plan featured an unexpected appearance from Captain Phantasm.

(As DR. NOIR is speaking, MITTENS and FLUFFY move behind the gangsters. SUNNY, FRANKIE, and JOHNNY are focused on DR. NOIR and don't notice. DR. NOIR stands, holding his sword cane.)

SUNNY

Oh, that. I mean, Captain Phantasm's appearance was rather unfortuous, but my associates handled the situation impeccably.

FRANKIE

Yeah, impeccably. Ain't that right, Johnny?

JOHNNY

Yeah, impec... impuh... we moiderized him!

DR. NOIR

Silence, imbeciles.

(To SUNNY)

I'm a tolerant man, Sunny. But the one thing I will not abide is failure.

(While he is speaking, DR. NOIR idly toys with his cane. As soon as he says the word "failure," MITTENS grabs FRANKIE'S arm and twists it behind his back, forcing him to the ground. FLUFFY does the same thing with JOHNNY. DR. NOIR draws his sword cane and holds the tip to SUNNY'S throat.)

DR. NOIR

In fact, I think you'll find my methods for dealing with incompetence to be harsh, yet effective.

SUNNY

(Nonchalantly)

Right. Failure is a bad thing. I think we understand each other, Doc.

(DR. NOIR nods and lowers his sword. MITTENS and FLUFFY release FRANKIE and JOHNNY, who climb to their feet. They look indignantly at the girls, but say nothing.)

DR. NOIR

I'm going to give you and your boys a chance to redeem yourselves, Sunny. I need you to run an errand for me. And this time, make sure it really does go... impeccably.

SUNNY

Yeah, right. Okay, Doc.

DR. NOIR

And I *really* do mean it this time.

SUNNY

Right, Doc.

DR. NOIR

Mittens! Fluffy! You girls accompany Sunny to make sure there are no slip-ups. Failure is not an option. You can take the Noircopter.

MITTENS

(Quietly, to DR. NOIR)

Doctor, we don't have a Noircopter.

DR. NOIR

(Sighs)

You see? This is exactly the kind of thing I'm talking about. Just a second.

(DR. NOIR turns from the others and fishes out a particularly femme change purse. He pulls out a handful of coins, then turns back to hand them to FLUFFY.)

DR. NOIR

Here. This should cover the cab fare. Remember, girls, failure is...

MITTENS, FLUFFY

(In unison)

...not an option. Right.

(All exit except DR. NOIR and the PIANO PLAYER. DR. NOIR watches after them for a second.)

DR. NOIR

And don't forget to get a receipt!

(Blackout)

Scene 3

(The spotlight falls on the EMCEE, who is standing on the side stage with the microphone.)

EMCEE

Meanwhile, Captain Phantasm, in his guise as Knox Henderson, arrives at the laboratory of... the Professor, one of the greatest minds in Metroville City who has made astonishing advances in the field of... SCIENCE. Let's go there now...

(The lights come up. We're in the laboratory. The PROFESSOR stands at a worktable, mixing chemicals in a beaker. KNOX stands to the side, watching.)

PROFESSOR

...and if we all floated away, why there'd be nobody left to stop the Communists from coming in and taking over! So that's why gravity is important, Knox.

KNOX

Um, that's great, Professor. Could we get back to my problem now? What should I do about Pretty?

PROFESSOR

Ah, the girl fancies someone else, does she? Poor lad.

KNOX

Yeah, but the problem is she's got the hots for Captain Phantasm.

PROFESSOR

Indeed? Well, then. Problem solved.

KNOX

But I want her to like me!

PROFESSOR

But... you are Captain Phantasm.

KNOX

Captain Phantasm is what I do, Professor. Knox Henderson is who I am.

PROFESSOR

(Shaking his head sympathetically)

Knox, Knox, Knox... Science has given us great insight into the inner workings of man, but we've yet to develop a scientific formula to map out the desires of... the human heart.

(PRETTY enters)

PRETTY

Hey, Detective. Hiya, Professor.

PROFESSOR

Ah, Miss Perfect. Knox was just bringing me up to date on your chemical plant robberies. Which chemicals did you say had been stolen?

PRETTY

(Consults her notepad)

Um, Hydrocillan, Mithromoxihydroxomine, Irbynex, Dolomite, and... Isotonium.

PROFESSOR

Say, Miss Perfect? Didn't I see your picture in the paper this morning?

PRETTY

Oh, yeah! The Peabody Award. I won...

PROFESSOR

Isotonium, eh? That's quite interesting.

KNOX

Why's that, Professor?

PROFESSOR

Well, taken separately, those particular compounds are as harmless as, say, sunlight, or lead paint. However, with the startling advances that we've made in the field of science, it has recently become possible to combine, or mix, those chemicals together to create a deadly and powerful toxin, or poison.

PRETTY

Golly!

PROFESSOR

(Dryly, matter-of-factly)

Golly indeed, Miss Perfect. Why, just a single drop of this toxin, or poison, would be enough to kill several dozen people. But it wouldn't be a quick and painless death. Oh, no, no, no. It would be quite excruciating.

KNOX

How so, Professor?

PROFESSOR

Well, within moments of ingesting the toxin, or poison, the victim would experience stomach cramps.

PRETTY

That doesn't sound so bad.

PROFESSOR

Severe stomach cramps.

KNOX

Still, that's not so...

PROFESSOR

Painful, debilitating stomach cramps as the internal organs liquefy and the bones dissolve into goo.

PRETTY, KNOX

(In unison)

Ewww.

PROFESSOR

And as his brain boils within his skull, he experiences a hellish torment beyond imagination. Each second feels like an eternity as his body thrashes helplessly in its agonizing death throes.

(PROFESSOR pulls a pack of cigarettes out of his pocket)

PROFESSOR (cont'd)

May I offer anyone a Sophisticate Cigarette? They're mild, good-tasting, and agree with your throat.

PRETTY

Um, the poison, Professor?

PROFESSOR

Ah, yes. Nasty business, that. Fortunately, there aren't but three men in the world with the requisite knowledge of science necessary to produce the toxin, or poison.

KNOX

Well, five'll get you ten that one of those three men is going to be Sunny Polito's next target.

PRETTY

So what can you tell us about these three eggheads, Professor?

PROFESSOR

The first is Doctor Wolfgang Klinkenhogan, a prominent instructor at the University of Wankendorf.

(Everybody snickers.)

PROFESSOR (cont'd)

The next is Professor Toberlone, a brilliant scientist in Switzerland who recently won a Nobel Prize for his recent studies in monkeys and alcohol consumption.

PRETTY

And the third one?

PROFESSOR

Ah, yes. The third man.

KNOX

Do you know him, Professor?

PROFESSOR

Know him? Indeed, I do, Knox. You might say I know him quite well. For you see, the third man who possesses the necessary degree of scientific knowledge to produce the toxin, or poison, is...

(The door bursts open, and in come MITTENS, FLUFFY, FRANKIE, JOHNNY, and SUNNY. MITTENS is carrying a large, black duffle bag which she drops on the floor. KNOX looks around quickly, then runs offstage without anyone noticing.)

PRETTY

(Looking at FRANKIE AND JOHNNY)

Hey, Knox! Aren't those the two thugs from the chemical plant this...

(PRETTY glances around, noticing that KNOX is gone)

PRETTY (cont'd)

Knox?

(FRANKIE and JOHNNY grab the PROFESSOR. PRETTY tries to flee.)

FLUFFY

Mittens! Stop her!

(MITTENS grabs PRETTY, who struggles valiantly until SUNNY raises her gun and points it at her head.)

PRETTY

Get that heater outta my face, you bimbo.

SUNNY

Feisty, ain't ya?

(Studies PRETTY'S face intently)

Say, you look kinda familiarlike. Don't I recognize you from somewheres?

PRETTY

Nah, I don't get down to the docks that often.

SUNNY

(Laughs sarcastically)

That's cute. You're a regular Gracie Allen.

(Cocks the gun loudly)

Now tell me who you are or I'll put a bullet in your cranials.

FRANKIE

She's a reporter, boss. She was snooping around the warehouse earlier when Captain Phantasm pinched us.

SUNNY

Oh yeah. Pretty Perfect, right? You're the one what journalized my mistrial last year. What was that you called me again? A delicious dame?

PRETTY

I called you "The Malicious Minx of the Metroville Mobs." I also said that you were a ditzy dame with more legs than brains, and the criminals in this city must be pretty incompetent if they needed *you* to lead them.

SUNNY

Oh yeah, that's right. You know, my mom cut out that article and put it in her scrapbook. One of the few times she ever told me she was proud of me.

(Sighs nostalgically)

Oh, well. Enough yapping. Time for this nosy frail to go bye bye.

FRANKIE

About time!

JOHNNY

Yeah, boss. Moiderize her!

FLUFFY

Put the gun away, Ma Barker. We've got a better idea.

(SUNNY reluctantly holsters her weapon. FLUFFY walks over to the duffle bag and fishes out a coil of rope, which she tosses to SUNNY. FLUFFY then helps MITTENS force the struggling PRETTY into the chair.)

FLUFFY

Tie her up.

(SUNNY ties PRETTY to the chair and gags her. MITTENS walks over to the duffle bag and rummages through it again.)

MITTENS

It's only a matter of time before Captain Phantasm shows up here, and we intend to have a little surprise waiting for him when he does.

(MITTENS pulls out a ridiculously convoluted bomb with sticks of dynamite and an alarm clock timer. She walks over to PRETTY, who is tied and gagged by this point. MITTENS pats her gently on the cheek, then sets the bomb underneath the chair.)

MITTENS

Let's go!

SUNNY

You heard her, boys. Let's vaccinate these premises.

JOHNNY

Yeah. Don't wanna keep Dr. Noir waiting.

FLUFFY

Hey, ya dumb palooka! Don't be using his name in public!

FRANKIE

It don't matter.

(Jerks a thumb towards PRETTY)

That dame's gonna be goulash in a few minutes anyway.

SUNNY

You two are gonna be goulash too if you don't button your lips. Now, let's amscray.

(SUNNY, MITTENS, FLUFFY, FRANKIE, and JOHNNY all exit with the PROFESSOR in tow. PRETTY struggles to free herself. CAPTAIN PHANTASM runs onstage. PRETTY tries desperately to warn him about the bomb.)

CAPTAIN PHANTASM

Miss Perfect! Are you all right?

(PRETTY'S frantic response is muffled.)

CAPTAIN PHANTASM

Those cads! What kind of despicable lowlifes would treat the fairer sex with such brutality? Fear not, Miss Perfect. For villainy is a piece of undigested sandwich, upsetting the stomach of society, and justice is the castor oil. And it is my duty to take villainy by the nose and force a large spoonful of justice down its throat...

(PRETTY interrupts the CAPTAIN with more frantic struggling and muffled shouts.)

CAPTAIN PHANTASM (cont'd)

A moment, Miss Perfect. They may have silenced your mouth, but they shall never stifle your intrepid spirit. Not as long as I, Captain Phantasm, am here to...

(PRETTY interrupts again, obviously annoyed.)

CAPTAIN PHANTASM (cont'd)

Ah, yes. A moment, if you will.

(The CAPTAIN *finally* pulls the gag out of PRETTY'S mouth.)

CAPTAIN PHANTASM (cont'd)

There we go. Now what is it that...

PRETTY

Bomb! There's a bomb under the chair!

CAPTAIN

A bomb? Great Caesar Salad!

(The stage goes dark. A massive explosion (LOUD) is heard, and the words TO BE CONTINUED... appear on the screen.)

(Blackout)

End of Excerpt

For more information, please contact
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