

Liberty University English Department

Saving the Superheroes

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Dedication

Normal Man and this supporting thesis are dedicated to my parents who always told me I could do great things, my dog who thinks I am a superhero, and my wife who is a superhero.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my savior, Jesus, for saving me time and time again, and my wife for encouraging me to keep going.

Abstract

Normal Man is a screenplay about Freddy, a below-average underdog who changes the world with the power of his positive thinking. The thesis briefly explores the psychology of how a person's perceived self-image could stop a highly qualified individual from achieving their dreams, while an underqualified person with a positive self-image can go on to greatness. Other underdogs are compared against Freddy in order to provide a relatable yet successful protagonist. The Beatitudes from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount are also analyzed to show how the supposed "backward" attitudes of Christianity can save the day.

Section 1 - Normal Man Artist Statement

Doctors hate this one simple trick to shed pounds overnight! Click here! Can you guess who is dating Hollywood's newest heartthrob? Read more here! Washington elite are furious at the freshman senator's VIP list! Would you make the cut?

Clickbait articles and videos bombard us online. Vanity Fair, Self, and Glamour call to us from the grocery store checkout line. Politicians enrage us when they propose or pass laws just for the sake of getting more votes next time. Athletes confound and amaze us with double sudden death triple overtime penalty shots or extra innings. Everywhere we look we are confronted with people who seem better than us. They're stronger or smarter or better looking. We wish we were them. We wish we had their lives, their mansions, and their moments on late-night talk shows. But at the end of the day when we turn off the television, we walk into the bathroom to get ready for bed and the only person staring at us from the mirror is ourselves. We think that we aren't able to actually make a real difference in the world. And so we dream.

Impetus: Why am I doing it?

We dream of really being able to make a difference in the world. Laws get overturned, authorities have to follow the rules, and it seems like the bad guys get away with everything. But not in our dreams. In our dreams we can fly, we beat up the school bully who used to steal our lunch money, and we know just what to say to melt hearts. Real life is a letdown, but our dreams are always entertaining. And that is why superhero movies are so popular right now. The world is a big messed up place and getting worse each day. But on the silver screen, Batman and Thor are keeping the forces of chaos and evil at bay.

But even in superhero movies we only see the world's image of what makes someone super. Thor and Captain America have jawlines so strong you could build a skyscraper on them. Iron Man graduated from MIT, Batman has a law degree from Yale, and Spider-Man has a graduate degree in biophysics and a doctorate in biochemistry. Marvel and DC seem to reserve the dropouts and ugly mugs for the villains, but many of us identify as the less-than-perfect. In the 2018 census, only 3.5% of Americans aged 25 or

older had a professional or doctorate degree. (“Number of People with Master’s”) Yet it seems like every member of the Avengers has at least two.

And what about positive body image? People online decry fat-shaming as a sin worse than genocide, yet we have reports of Hugh Jackman passing out while filming *Logan*. (Nerdist) Actors, comedians, and producers went to jail by the truckload for making improper advances towards women on sets, yet the Black Widow and Wonder Woman look like they were poured into their uniforms. These are the people we are supposed to look up to. But when I looked at them, I decided that I had had enough.

I was tired of the short fat guys getting written in as comic relief. I was frustrated at never measuring up to the mental or physical images that Hollywood told me I should be. I know plenty of amazing people who are overweight or have poor complexion. Some of the kindest people I know are not very intelligent. So one day I imagined what it would be like to have a movie where the dumb, fat, and ugly guy saves the day.

Vision: What do I want to do with it?

I don’t want *Normal Man* to merely save the day, however. I want this film to change minds. Millennials struggle with depression. We want things to be better, but all our efforts seem futile. We vote and the other guy gets elected. We try to save for houses and the market implodes before we can afford one. We try to stay informed only to learn that half the news out there is fake news or clickbait articles. So we curl up with our avocado toast, scroll through a few pages of memes, and watch the world burn.

We feel surges of enthusiasm when we see people on the news introducing new legislation for a worthy cause. We get excited when the quarterback escapes the offensive linemen and runs in a touchdown. But when the television powers down and we plug our phones in for the night we just sink deeper into the gloom as we compare ourselves to those people. We feel like the comic relief in a superhero movie. I didn’t identify with Peter Parker in *Spider-Man: Far From Home*. I identified with Ned Leeds. Fat, nerdy, more comfortable with a computer than with a bunch of other people my age at a party? Yeah, that’s me.

Hollywood says that fat and nerdy people aren't good enough to be superheroes. But I know plenty of people who don't look the part who are still heroes in my community. What about the old guy at work? He's been with the company for forty-three years, his back is hunched, and he's got a few health issues. He has taught me so much about my job from our document management system to where we keep spare parts to how to properly annotate drawings before they get released for production. My father also comes to mind. He volunteers at a food bank. There are never any camera crews there or reporters, and nobody ever sees him there. But he's helping people in my community stay fed. The list goes on: the recovered addict who continues to volunteer at recovery meetings to help others, the greeter at the grocery store who always has a word of encouragement, the Sunday school teacher who deals with crying toddlers every week out of the goodness of her heart. Without these people, our communities would crumble and fall apart.

The news and the movies rarely show these people. They show us the CEOs and senators, but never the soup kitchen workers or the school janitors. These are the people I want to show to the world. Freddy is one of these people. He owns a comic book store in a rough part of town. He has a one-bedroom apartment right next to the train tracks. He's been mugged on the way to work a few times. His store has bars on the windows. It's not a good situation. But he is one of those guys who will never say never. He's always got a smile and a friendly word for anyone he meets. He buys coffee for the homeless man on the corner every morning even though he's barely making ends meet. His natural tendency is to help those around him and nothing short of an act of God can stop Freddy. He is the embodiment of the unseen hero in our communities.

Context: Who is going to get it?

Freddy will not be, however, another sob story. I cannot deny the success of the Hallmark Channel and its cozy holiday movies. Hallmark released 40 Christmas movies in 2021. That was the same amount as in 2020 and 2019. (Fitzgerald) People are obviously watching and paying for their movies. But that's not the audience I want to speak to.

I am also not seeking awards or accolades. Film festivals lavish awards on niche movies and their crews all the time. They may be really great movies with spectacular performances. The plot may be gripping and move people to cry. They may have actors and actresses who inspire or condemn and cause the viewers to make real changes in their lives. But they never make it on a national scale. Perhaps this is an indictment of the common people and their lack of taste. Perhaps this is an indictment on myself and how quickly I am selling out. But I prefer to think I am choosing the most widely accepted delivery system for my message.

And that delivery system is going to be action! We need explosions! We need car chases! We need lame one-liners that make people roll their eyes so hard that they get concussions. Those are the movies the masses go to see, and that is the format I am aiming for. Not for the money, not for the fame, but so I can talk to as many people as possible.

The 2010s saw an explosion of superhero movies. The Marvel franchise began rolling out an ambitious movie lineup. *Iron Man* began the franchise in 2008, and after a hugely positive response to the movie, Marvel began a schedule that would introduce many of the main superheroes, bring them together, tear them apart, and ultimately pit them against anything the multiverse had to throw at them. This has led to thirty movies being made so far, with at least ten more in the works. (“Marvel Movies In Order”)

Marvel is not making so many movies just because comic book fans send lots of fan mail. They’re making these movies because they generate tons of revenue. They generate so much revenue because so many people see the movies. The top-grossing movies of the 2010s include five Marvel movies in the top 10. *Black Panther* brought in \$1.349 billion at position 10, while *Avengers: Endgame* brought in over \$2.799 billion and was the top-grossing movie in the last decade. Comic book movies hold twelve of the top fifty spots, with franchises like *The Fast and the Furious*, the *Jurassic World* trilogy, *Star Wars*, *James Bond*, and *The Hobbit* trilogy taking most of the rest of the spots. Now, these movies aren’t just mindless explosions and fast cars. While the capes and the superpowers probably helped their sales a bit, they have much to tell us about the human condition or the value of kindness.

One of the defining characteristics of a hero is courage. Courage is the “mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty.” (“Courage”) Throughout Tony Stark’s career as Iron Man, he is conflicted with his desire to be a playboy billionaire and his inner conscience telling him to help people and do the right thing. He enjoys immense fame when he tells the world that he is indeed Iron Man and he relishes his position as the unofficial leader of the Avengers. Yet for all his bravado, when push came to shove, it was Tony who took the nuclear missile through the portal to save New York. (*The Avengers*) He knew it was going to be a one-way trip, and it nearly killed him, but he chose to proceed in the face of danger. He decided that he had to push aside his fear and do what needed to be done even though it might cost him his life.

Freddy will not come across many life-threatening situations in my screenplay. But he will have to stand up to adversity as he tries to save the superheroes. He will have many opportunities to throw in the towel and give up. He will be laughed at, rejected, and scorned. His attempts to help will be met with derision and even violence. But he knows that giving up on these people isn’t an option. They seem all put together when they have a press conference, but he sees their real side back at the headquarters. The superheroes in *Normal Man* are flawed and hurting people just like the rest of us. And that’s who Freddy is going to save.

The other aspect of *Normal Man* that will hook audiences is the underdog theme. If we look at Tony Stark, we see nothing of an underdog. But Tony’s friend Steve Rogers, better known as Captain America, is the epitome of an underdog. (*Captain America: The First Avenger*) He was short. He was skinny. He never got the girl and he wasn’t allowed to join the war effort at a time when nearly every able-bodied man was drafted to go fight the Nazis. But he never gave up. He had visited all the recruiters in the area, many times giving fake identities, just to be able to join and help fight. And each time he was rejected he got up and tried again.

Later on, when he was selling bonds, he was told he was not allowed to go save his friends behind enemy lines. But he couldn’t sit there in comfort and safety while his friends were being held captive by the Germans. He didn’t know how to fight, he was a glorified salesman. Sure he had the

muscles now, but inside he was still that scrawny kid from the Bronx. But even though nobody believed he could do it, perhaps because they didn't believe, he commandeered a motorcycle and embraced his destiny.

Steve Rogers is joined by a host of other underdogs that were never in a comic book. Daniel "Rudy" Ruettiger was too small to play and not smart enough to attend college. But his determination kept pushing him forward until he finally got a chance to play football. (*Rudy*) Disney's *Alladin* tells the tale of a homeless street urchin who rises to greatness with the help of a genie, but in the end, his humble roots and tender heart are what save the day. (*Alladin*) Po the panda had zero martial arts ability, but after being chosen to be the next Dragon Warrior by an accident, he resolves to train as hard as he can to learn kung fu and ends up saving his village. (*Kung Fu Panda*) Emmet Brickowski doesn't have a creative block in his body, but he is prophesied to be The Special and is supposed to be a Master Builder. He spent his whole life following plans and never building anything creatively. All the other Master Builders laugh at him and tell him he'll never build anything great. But in the end, he tries anyway and saves the day. (*The LEGO Movie*) These characters weren't anything special to those around them. But although they knew this well, they never gave up trying.

This is what *Normal Man* is all about. Everybody tells him he can't do it. His snarky friend at the comic shop tells him he'll never be anything great. The other superheroes tell him he's only getting in their way. And at the end, the supervillain tells him he's a joke. That is what the world is telling us. We can't change the course of history by casting one single vote. We can't save the environment by recycling a few jars and plastic bottles each week. We can't secure the hope and future of the next generation just by reading bedtime stories. But we can. And that is what Freddy is going to show the world. He saves the superheroes each time he mends their costume or gives them a hot cup of tea after they fight crime. We save the world each time we put a bandaid on a skinned knee or hold the door open for someone. We save the world each time we toss a bottle in the recycling or put our ballet in the box.

Significance: How will it change the world?

That vote is not going to get cast, however, if people don't want to go vote. Moms and dads won't stand up and be better parents if they think it's a hopeless cause. I want people to believe in themselves again. I want people to not just understand they can be super, I want them to want to be super.

I got married last year to a wonderful woman with two daughters, so last Christmas was my first time shopping for toys. We bought an Easy Bake Oven and some home science experiment kits. We bought them clothes, of course. We even found a bust with long hair so the girls could braid, comb, and style it to their hearts' content. One of the things I noticed while shopping, however, was the absolute inundation of movie merchandise. Black Panther claws and Mjolnir hammers lined one aisle while Frozen dresses and Minions crowded the next. People want to be Elsa and T'Chaka.

I want people to want to be Freddy. He is going to be the underdog that people cheer for, and he is going to be the savior of the superheroes. His character, however, is what I most want to show to audiences. Throughout the movie, Freddy is going to be mocked and rebuffed. I want to loosely follow the Beatitudes with his responses. (*ESV Bible*) Freddy knows he is lowly and humble, or poor in spirit and meek, and this makes him such a contrast to the superheroes who think they're the best thing since sliced bread. Freddy is saddened by his fellow superheroes' self-induced plight, and it is this mourning that urges him into action to help them. He hungers after the righteousness of helping his neighbor, he is merciful to those who mocked him, he is pure in the motives of his heart, and he is one heck of a peacemaker. Don't even get me started on persecution. That's the whole first half of the script. These beautiful attitudes are what I want viewers to take away from Freddy.

Freddy tries to save the world with feng shui and herbal tea. I am trying to change the world with a movie script. Everyone tells Freddy he isn't strong enough or smart enough to make a dent. My inner voices tell me this is foolishness and I am only chasing after the wind. But Freddy never gave up, so I'm not going to either.

Section 2 - Critical Paper: *Normal Man*

Discussion of the Craft: How To Make A Superhero Movie

Normal Man will not exist in a vacuum. The world has been inundated with superhero movies in recent years and this will merely be a drop in the bucket. That means that *Normal Man* will have plenty of precedents to pull from, as well as plenty of competition to rise against. The biggest competition comes from the Marvel Cinematic Universe, or the MCU. This cinematic undertaking is the first of its kind with over 40 movies already produced or in production that all share the same universe, overall plot, and characters. From Ant-Man to the Hulk, these films have drawn billions of dollars in revenue and millions of viewers to the cinemas. But what makes these movies so successful?

In part, their success lies in the fact that their characters are relatable. Comic book heroes of the past seemed to be incorruptible paragons of virtue. Superman would never allow his feelings to interfere with stopping Lex Luthor. Sure they had their weaknesses, but they always seemed to be external forces, like Superman's kryptonite. But as the comic book industry matured, its heroes did as well. The heroes became more relatable as the industry matured, with many developing very relatable flaws and personality tics. Today we have Tony Stark battling with narcissism, Thor combatting depression, and most of the Avengers dealing with PTSD in some form or another. Many people out in the audience can identify with those struggles. It's their flaws that make them so believable.

Today's comic book heroes make flawed personal choices as well. Sure they might be saving the world, but are they doing so for the right reasons? *Captain America: Civil War* explored the hero's motivations as it split the Avengers and pitted them against themselves. Tony Stark supported government oversight in the Avengers' activities while Steve Rogers did not. Tony acted out of shame for his role in the creation of Ultron. Steve operated from a position of mistrust of his country. Both shame and mistrust are motivators that have led to many poor decisions across the world. Wars have been fought and families have been broken because of shame and mistrust.

These very common problems that the superheroes face in today's movies are what keep audiences coming back to the theatres. And these problems are going to run through all the characters in

Normal Man. The superheroes in the Hero's Guild are flawed and broken people. Many of them are alcoholics, quite a few are narcissists, and a handful of mental illnesses pop up here and there through the ranks. The three main heroes are Blasto, Katana Kate, and Frank the Tank. Blasto has severe anger issues and nearly hurts Freddy a few times during their interactions. Kate has narcissistic qualities and likes to turn a blind eye to Blasto and Frank's shenanigans while they're not fighting crime. And Frank struggles with alcoholism. All three are also complacent and would rather stick with the status quo instead of trying to grow or improve themselves.

Freddy is no saint either. He is afraid of failure and struggles with hero worship of the superheroes. Toward the beginning of the movie, he tries to get their signature on his application to join the Hero's Guild. He tries to tell them it's an application but every time he opens his mouth they talk over him, and he lets them because he is too afraid to interrupt them. Later on, Freddy endures some scathing verbal abuse from Blasto and Frank on two different instances, but meekly accepts it. And at the midpoint in Act II, Freddy nearly breaks down and gives up because of his reception in the Hero's Guild. These feelings of doubt and depression will resonate with audiences who feel powerless in their own lives.

Enter Stage Left: The Underdog

Superhero movies aren't the only films that relate to *Normal Man*. While Freddy isn't a superhero, he is an underdog. Underdog movies have captivated audiences for decades as the unlikely character rises up to save the day. Some of the best-known underdog movies include *Aladdin*, *Rudy*, and from more modern times, *Kung Fu Panda*, and *The LEGO Movie*. All of these movies feature a main character who came from nothing.

Aladdin was a street urchin without a penny to his name. The opening scenes show him stealing bread just to stay alive. But it is the underdog's character that helps them rise above their circumstances. *Aladdin* shows his true colors when he shares his bread with other beggars. Later on, he rescues Princess Jasmin from an angry merchant without any thought of repayment. As the movie progresses and *Aladdin* becomes snared by Jafar's plots, he finds the lamp and meets the genie. Suddenly *Aladdin's* money

troubles seem to be over. But as we all know, money comes and goes. It is a person's character that remains in the end. When Aladdin's wealth and influence are taken away from him, he still manages to trick Jafar into becoming a genie and trapping himself in a lamp. When it was all said and done, Aladdin had one wish left, but instead of regaining his lost wealth and princely title, he spends his last wish to set the genie free. This moved the sultan so much that he changed the law to allow Jasmin and Aladdin to marry.

Aladdin was based on Arabic folk tales, but *Rudy* was based on real-life events. Rudy is a factory worker at a steel mill who doesn't have the grades, talent, or physical ability to compete in college football. But playing for Notre Dame was his biggest dream. After a close call with death, Rudy decides to try and achieve his dream. When his application to Notre Dame is refused, Rudy looks to community college to help his grades improve. After two years of classes and three refused applications to Notre Dame, he finally gets accepted and transfers to his dream university. But his troubles don't stop there. He tries to join the football team but just isn't tall enough or big enough. But after a while, the coach notices Rudy's determination and lets him join the practice squad. Again, Rudy tries for the impossible and asks to join the team for the last game of his senior year. The coach refuses and Rudy quits the team in despair. His teammates, who by now are impressed with Rudy's resolve, go into the coach's office one by one to petition to let Rudy play in the last game. In the end, Rudy got to play and sacked the opposing team's quarterback. Throughout the movie, Rudy's persistence enabled an ordinary man to do extraordinary things.

Kung Fu Panda is another underdog movie about an ordinary character doing the extraordinary. Po is a panda who lacks the strength, training, or hand-eye coordination to be a kung fu master. He works with his adoptive father selling noodles, but always wishes he could be something more. When a martial arts competition comes to his town, Po accidentally gets caught up in the middle of it and is declared the Dragon Warrior that prophecy foretold. The other students of the monastery are dubious, but the master won't change his mind. Po repeatedly fails the tests and training set forth by the monastery and despairs of ever being a master. He is too fat and lazy. One of the teachers, however, realizes that Po's most

significant weakness may in fact be his biggest strength. He teaches Po to use his love of food as a way to learn martial arts. In this way, Po is able to defeat the evil warrior that was trying to become the next Dragon Warrior. Po saves his village not with chopsticks, but with ingenuity.

In *The LEGO Movie*, ingenuity is the one thing Emmet lacks. Emmet is a construction worker without the vision or creativity to be a Master Builder. He loves doing the same thing over and over according to the master plan and doesn't ever want to branch out or change. But change is coming, and when he learns of a plan to freeze his world, Emmet is forced to change his ways to save his world. One of the other Master Builders had prophesied that a new Master Builder would come to save the world, and that Emmet is The Special. But none of the other Master Builders believe the prophecy, including Emmet. So when push comes to shove, Emmet does the only thing he knows how to do and sacrifices himself to stop the enemy. This selfless act catalyzes the rest of the Master Builders into action and they stop the destruction of the world.

In *Normal Man*, Freddy is not going to be saving the world. But he is going to save the superheroes. Like the other underdogs mentioned above, Freddy comes from nothing. He is poor, lonely, and not very attractive. He works at a comic book store in a bad part of town and struggles to make ends meet. But his determination to keep going no matter what odds are stacked against him keeps a smile on his face and a song in his heart. When he finds the application to join the Hero's Guild and eventually gets accepted, things begin to look up for Freddy. But just like Rudy, his troubles do not end there. The other heroes are against him from the very start and don't accept his unorthodox methods of helping. But as time passes, Freddy's methods begin to positively affect the heroes' lives. His ingenuity helps them fight crime better and his positivity helps bring many of the heroes out of their self-serving frames of mind. Like Alladin, Rudy, Po, and Emmet, Freddy comes from nothing to rise up and change the world.

The Twist: Beatitudes

If we look back at world changers, the most prominent person from a Christian perspective is Christ himself. This man changed the course of human history. His life is the foundation upon which the whole world bases its calendar. And ultimately, he brought about an end to the separation between man

and God. But Jesus wasn't a conqueror or a mighty warrior. He told his disciples to turn the other cheek and pray for their enemies. One of his most famous discussions was the Sermon on the Mount in which he took the popular opinion about what makes a person great and turned it on its head.

Jesus said that the blessed people are those whom society considers losers and failures. He proclaimed that those who are meek, who mourned, and who are poor in spirit will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. Many people in that day laughed at Jesus and dismissed him as a fool. And people today are no different. Men and women who make the front cover of Time or Forbes are not usually considered meek or poor in spirit. Most superheroes aren't either. Yet if we look closely, we can see examples of the beatitudes in modern film.

Some of the movies we've already looked at exhibit characters who are poor in spirit. Humility is one of the most underrated qualities in our world these days, but it can move mountains. Pride fights and stirs up conflict, but humility brings peace. Nobody can fight against someone who doesn't fight back. Nobody can argue with someone who won't verbally spar with them. Humility pulls down the walls and encourages inclusivity.

Steve Rogers shows humility in his origin movie. He starts out as a skinny young man before the serum treatment. But even though he isn't strong or capable, he still considers others before he thinks of himself. In the famous scene with the grenade, Colonel Chester Phillips tosses a fake grenade into a group of army recruits. All the men dive away to save themselves, but Steve Rogers leaps onto the grenade in order to shield those around him from the blast. Later on, when he is a bond salesman, he learns of Allied soldiers that are being held by Nazi forces. Colonel Phillips refuses to send troops out to rescue the soldiers. Although Steve has no formal combat training, he heads out and saves them.

Po the panda also showed humility in *Kung Fu Panda*. He never considers himself to be a good candidate for the Dragon Warrior and doesn't believe Master Oogway's decision to make Po the Dragon Warrior. This lasts nearly the whole movie until he meets the evil Tai Lung. Tai Lung wants to be the Dragon Warrior and enters the monastery in order to take the Dragon Scroll for himself. Po, still

believing that he has no chance of defeating Tai Lung, stands up to protect his friends. He believes it will be his death, but nonetheless, he puts their lives ahead of his own.

Freddy will follow in the footsteps of Po and Steve Rogers. He is enamored with the other heroes in the Hero's Guild and constantly puts them first at his own expense. He knows that he has no superpowers and constantly defers to those who do. In one scene, Freddy tries to help the heroes relax after a particularly difficult mission. But Blasto is having none of it and verbally lashes out at Freddy. Freddy apologizes and retreats. In another scene, a crime alert comes on the main computer and the heroes are deciding who will go out to stop the bad guys. Freddy isn't picked, much to his chagrin, but when the heroes leave to fight crime, Freddy is genuinely supportive of them and doesn't hold a grudge.

Thor also put others' lives before his own but at a steep cost to himself. In his origin movie, he falls in love with Dr. Jane Foster. But after returning to Asgard to stop Loki's plans, Thor destroys the Bifrost bridge and prevents himself from seeing Jane again. Later, in *Ragnarok*, Thor's father Odin dies. The final straw comes in *Infinity War* when Thanos kills half the universe. Thor can't take any more and sinks into a deep depression. Jesus said, "Blessed are those mourn, for they shall be comforted." (ESV Matt. 5:4) Thor temporarily shakes off his depression in *Endgame* but the dull ache of loneliness follows him into *Love and Thunder*. It is only when he reunites with Dr. Jane Foster that he is able to reconcile himself to all the loss he has endured. Gorr, the god killer, is moved by Thor's honor and decides to revive his daughter instead of killing all the gods. After Gorr dies, Thor adopts Gorr's daughter and becomes a father. In this way, he is comforted by his new family and goes on to build a life together with his new daughter.

Freddy also deals with depression. During the day he is all smiles and cheerfulness, but at night after he goes to his room the mask comes off and he confides to his pet turtle that he doesn't think he's cut out for this job. He tries so hard to help, but most of the time, the heroes aren't helped by what he did and are mad at Freddy for even trying to help. In fact, at the midpoint of the film Freddy nearly throws in the towel. It takes a visit from the eldest superhero to encourage him to keep on trying.

Despite his depression, Thor was one of the most self-assured and confident superheroes. Spider-Man, on the other hand, was one of the least. Peter Parker was just a high school kid when he got bit by a spider and developed his superpowers. Yet he still retained his meek attitude. He looked up to Tony Stark like a father and never lost the awe of his fellow Avengers. Even in *Captain America: Civil War* when the heroes were fighting each other, Peter kept apologizing to the people he was fighting or complimenting them and telling them he was a big fan. Even as he was fighting, Spider-Man used his strength and agility to stop others from getting hit like when he pulled Captain America's shield away or stopped Bucky from hitting him instead of hitting back. This showed Peter's attitude of meekness like he was walking amongst giants and was afraid of making a misstep.

One of the heroes Spider-Man kept complimenting was Captain America. Both Spider-Man and Captain America show mercy throughout their films. Steve Rogers repeatedly seeks out his friend Bucky in multiple attempts to save him. First in *Captain America: Winter Soldier*, Steve finds out that the assassin known as the Winter Soldier is his long-lost friend Bucky. Rogers refuses to fight his friend, believing that his friend may yet be saved. Later on in *Captain America: Civil War*, Rogers again tries to save Bucky and break his brainwashing. It is this mercy that causes Iron Man to turn on his friend and leads to their fighting. But ultimately, Roger's merciful character is what helps to break down the walls of conflict within the Avengers.

Spider-Man is also known for his merciful nature. Some of the oldest comics depict Peter Parker as a stereotypical "nice guy." When he defeats burglars or muggers on the streets of New York City, he usually leaves them tied up with webbing and waiting for the police to find them. All three Spider-Man iterations, including Tobey McGuire, Andrew Garfield, and Tom Holland, show their merciful natures through all their films. Tobey McGuire saved the people on the train and nearly killed himself in the process. Andrew Garfield saves the people on the bridge from the reptilian Connor's attacks. Tom Holland fights to stop Toomes from stealing alien weapons from Avengers' Tower. During the fight, Toomes' vulture suit explodes and Peter Parker has a chance to kill him or leave him to die. Instead, Parker pulls Toomes to safety and leaves him tied up with webs and waiting for the police.

Freddy doesn't have superpowers, and he doesn't get into fights, but he has ample opportunity to show mercy to his fellow superheroes. During the day while they are out fighting crime, Freddy stays at the guild headquarters. He keeps busy by helping the heroes in whatever way he can. Blasto and Frank the Tank repeatedly berate Freddy for his attempts to help. Freddy could get even with them while they're out in the daytime, but instead, he tries harder to help them. In one exchange, Freddy has shrunk Blasto's uniform in the laundry. Blasto rips into Freddy in front of the whole group of superheroes. But instead of revenge, Freddy makes Blasto a new uniform.

As *Normal Man* progresses and Freddy interacts with the superheroes, he will show audiences how Jesus' version of strength can save the day. Many people would disagree that meekness, humility, or mourning can be strengths. But we've seen how superheroes in Marvel movies use the beatitudes to their advantage, and Freddy will do the same.

How Freddy Gives Us Hope

Freddy could be the best friend with the noblest intentions to these superheroes, but if the audiences don't get anything from Freddy, then what's the point? Freddy isn't just giving the superheroes a new outlook on life, he is giving them hope. He doesn't just show audiences that superheroes can change, he shows audiences that they can change too. He shows audiences that they need hope.

To start with, Freddy himself needs hope. The movie starts with Freddy working a low-paying job, living in a tiny apartment, and having no friends. He is mugged on his way to work. He barely has enough money to afford food. His life is hopeless. He can't realistically expect anything to change. But then one day he gets a surprise.

He works at a comic book store and one day when he gets a new shipment of comics, one of them has a superhero application form. This eventually leads to Freddy leaving his 'normal world' and joining the superhero guild. But this single piece of paper he finds folded up in a vintage comic book was the one thing he needed to regain his hope. He almost succumbs to despair in the first scene when he misses an opportunity to get a superhero's autograph. But after he finds the application, he has renewed vigor for his goals.

Later on at the midpoint, Freddy almost gives up again. He has worked tirelessly to improve the lives of those around him. He has tried bringing them hot tea after they get back from a fight in order to help their muscles relax and repair, but he is laughed at and ignored. He tried to make a new uniform for one of the main superheroes, but that hero explodes in anger. Freddy tries rearranging the headquarters in order to help the heroes get out the door more efficiently when villains attack. All the superheroes laugh at him and tell him how dumb he is.

Freddy almost breaks from the constant doubt and harassment from the superheroes. But the mentor figure on the superhero team steps in and reminds Freddy why he is fighting. He tells Freddy that he is making a difference and that the others are beginning to change. “After all,” he says, “that’s why I approved your application.” This gives Freddy a shot in the arm and he continues to try to help the superheroes. Eventually, his efforts begin to produce fruit and the superheroes appreciate Freddy.

Audiences need to be reminded that even a small thing can give us hope. In *Thor: Love and Thunder*, Gorr becomes a god-killer when his god lets his daughter die. He goes mad with hatred and begins traveling across the galaxy killing gods. At the end of the movie when Thor and Dr. Jane Foster, now known as Mighty Thor, try to stop Gorr, they ultimately lose the battle. Gorr summons Eternity who will give him one wish, and he plans to wish for the death of all gods.

At this critical moment, Thor turns away. He cradles the dying Jane in his arms and cherishes his last moments with her. Gorr is flabbergasted. “How dare you turn your back on me?” Thor is not intimidated. Here he is, about to die, and his only desire is to be with the woman he loves. “Why would I spend my last moments with you when I can be with her? I choose love.” Thor’s strongest move was to stop fighting. This profoundly changed how Gorr viewed others and that tiny glimmer of hope changed his heart. Instead of wishing for the death of all the gods, Gorr wished for his daughter to be brought back to life. Hope saved Thor. Hope saved all the other gods who were still out there. Hope even saved Gorr, redeeming him right before the god-killing sword took his life.

Thor and Freddy are not the only ones who are saved by hope. In *Normal Man*, Blasto, Katana Kate, and the other superheroes need it. They go through their lives living only for themselves.

Whenever they save the city, it is so they can get accolades. They want to show up on the news, on magazine covers, and in people's social media feeds. They don't care about actually saving anybody's life. All they want is to look good. Unfortunately, for them, this behavior is self-destructive. It is unsustainable and one day the bottom will drop out if they're not careful. We see that in Frank the Tank's life. He rejects Freddy's help and ultimately ends up leaving the superheroes guild and siding with the supervillain.

When Freddy comes into their lives, the superheroes begin to realize that they are not the center of existence. When they go fight the villains to save someone, the act of saving needs to be their goal. Not the news cameras afterward. Freddy gives them hope they didn't know they need when they start living for someone besides themselves. When the other heroes see Frank's fall, the hope that Freddy showed them is even clearer.

In *The LEGO Movie*, Emmitt and the rest of the Master Builders are stuck in prison while they watch President Business destroy Bricksburg. Business has also set an explosive to destroy all the Master Builders. During the whole movie, Emmitt has been struggling with the prophecy that he is supposed to be the Special, but he doesn't believe it. He believes that these Master Builders stuck here in the prison with him are the real geniuses and he is only holding them back. Now, they are all going to die, and the world they had tried to save would be doomed. Emmitt makes a heroic decision to sacrifice himself in order to stop the bomb from exploding.

The Master builders can't believe it. But they latch on to this flame of hope and escape the prison. They form a resistance and begin fighting President Business. The Master Builders remember how hard Emmitt tried, even though he wasn't a master like them, and they encourage the population of Bricksburg to start building things too. Emmitt's gift of hope ended up empowering every citizen of the LEGO world.

While Freddy doesn't sacrifice himself, he does deliver the same gift of hope to the superheroes in *Normal Man*. Once the heroes begin to listen to Freddy and try his seemingly foolish suggestions, they start winning. They begin to defeat the villains when they go out on an alert. At one point Freddy

rearranges the mission briefing room where all the superheroes' gear waits in lockers and hooks on walls. Freddy realizes it would be better if he set things up in a streamlined approach so people aren't bumping into each other. Once the locker area has become efficient, he declares they'll make it out much faster. All the heroes laugh at him. But the next time there is an alert, they rush out, gear up, and go fight crime. That night when they return, Katana Kate analyzes their statistics and realizes he was right all along. They won that battle because they were ready in record time thanks to Freddy's reorganization.

In a different scene, Freddy volunteers his expertise. He's read a lot of comic books working at his old job at the comic book store, and he's seen some of the tactics the villains are using. Freddy is ruthlessly mocked, but when the heroes go out that day, they are beaten. When they return home, they realize the villains used the exact tactic Freddy warned them about. Later on, they are able to defeat the villains more often because of Freddy's help.

In all these examples, the characters find or give hope. And that is what helps them win the fight against evil. Freddy finds hope in encouragement from a mentor figure. The superheroes find hope against enemies they couldn't defeat. And ultimately, the superheroes find the hope they didn't realize they needed in the first place. They become better people. Their character is refined and cleaned because of the hope that Freddy brings to the Superheroes' Guild. This is what I want to deliver to audiences.

Some may empathize with Freddy and think that they don't have the ability to make an impact on the world. I would counter with Freddy's life and show them that anyone, regardless of their size, shape, beauty rating, or intelligence level, can positively impact the world. Sully Sharp, the supervillain, is the strongest and smartest person in the story. He has more superpowers than the rest of the superheroes or supervillains. He is remarkably good-looking. But he doesn't possess the power to be great because he treats other people like garbage. Freddy is his foil in all ways: he's under-intelligent, overweight, and not that handsome. But he cares so deeply about his fellow people that he cannot help but be great because he lifts up those around him.

Others in the audience may feel like Blasto and be stuck in a self-destructive rut. They may feel like they're doing the same thing over and over again and they have no recourse. I want to show them the

superheroes who were stuck in a rut. I want to show them how self-centered and conceited they were, then show them changing. I want to give them hope that change is possible. Blasto has super anger issues and hurts the ones he loves. Katana Kate is codependent and can't act without the group's consent. They all have issues, flaws, and character defects, but they all change because someone was willing to help them. But more importantly, they were willing to accept the change.

When audiences see this movie, I want them to walk out of the theater inspired to change. I don't care if they remember the characters or walk away with a new list of one-liners to share at work. I don't care if they think the action was on par with Marvel or DC or Lucasfilm. All I want is to show them hope. Freddy was nothing. At the end of the movie, he is still just a regular guy, just a normal man. But that man traded in the currency of hope everywhere he went. He saved the superheroes.

Section 3 - Manuscript

NORMAL MAN

Jeff Nickles

Jeff Nickles



INT. CONVENTION CENTER, CANON CITY - MORNING

PEOPLE IN COSTUME MINGLE WITH FANS. BOOTHS DISPLAY COMIC BOOKS and superhero memorabilia. A line of people waits on autographs from the superheroes.

FREDDY MIDLETON (43) stands in line. He is shorter than average, fatter than average, and less handsome than average. He wears a backpack filled to bursting, a heavily laden fanny pack, has spare Sharpies in his shirt pocket, and a huge smile on his face.

People in line rub tired shoulders. Children talk too loudly and tug on their parents' arms. Someone is having an argument on their cell phone and gesturing wildly in line. People near him give him dirty looks.

Freddy wears a big smile, is bouncing on his toes, and constantly looking ahead to see how close he is. An ATTENDANT (19) chewing gum and staring off into space stands at the front of the line letting people in to get autographs.

ATTENDANT

Next!

A COSPLAYER (33) in a long trench coat in front of Freddy steps forward but he's standing on the tails. It rips!

COSPLAYER

Hey, watch out! You friggin
idiot, you ruined my costume!

Freddy claps his hands to his face.

FREDDY

I am so sorry! Is that Katana
Kate's first costume? It's
fantastic! Back when she was
working with the Mental Maverick?

He takes off his backpack and pulls out a sewing kit. The Cosplayer closes her mouth and lowers her fists. She stares curiously at Freddy.

COSPLAYER

Yeah, that's right. Wow, most people don't remember this outfit.

FREDDY

Well, I'm a bit obsessive.

COSPLAYER

Haha, aren't we all?

Freddy holds up a needle.

FREDDY

You mind if I?

She takes off the jacket and hands it to him.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

I usually come as Mr. Brawny but my costume is at the cleaners. This is a simple French seam. Put a patch here and here, and voila!

The cosplayer's mouth falls open. She puts on the jacket.

FREDDY

You're gonna want to get that re-sewn for real, but that patch should hold for the rest of the day.

COSPLAYER

Wow, that was quick.

FREDDY

You might look into replacing this seam and the one on the other side with a row of buttons. That way you can transition from this to the vest she wore.

Freddy hands over the jacket and begins packing up his sewing supplies.

COSPLAYER

That's a good idea. I'd love to see your Mr. Brawny outfit next time the con is back in town.

FREDDY

Hey, that would be a lot of fun!

ATTENDANT

Next!

The Cosplayer goes forward to meet the superheroes. Freddy waits at the front of the line. As soon as the Cosplayer gets her autographs and starts to leave, all the heroes get up looking at their watches.

FREDDY

(pointing)

Oh look! They must have gotten an alert! This is so cool!

ATTENDANT

Sorry folks, the line is closed. The heroes have a special alert to get to. Please come back next time.

FRANK THE TANK (34) pulls out a flask as he walks away.

FRANK THE TANK

Yeah, a lunch alert!

The other superheroes laugh. The attendant hangs the velvet rope in front of Freddy, barring him from the autograph table. She doesn't make eye contact.

ATTENDANT

Sorry Freddy, maybe next time.

Freddy stands there looking at the empty autograph table as the other people in line turn and leave.

INT. BODEGA - EVENING

Freddy is at a bodega with groceries on the counter. He reaches into his pocket and doesn't have enough money. He moves a frozen dinner to the side and CHECK OUT LADY (54) shakes her

head. He moves something else and she frowns at him. He moves a pack of soda and she smiles and reaches over to take all his money. She gives him 1 penny back as change.

INT. NICE RESTAURANT IN CANON CITY - EVENING

BLASTO (29) Frank the Tank, and KATANA KATE (32) walk into a restaurant, walk past everyone standing in line, and go towards the back. Some people frown, others look lovingly at the heroes. The superheroes don't pay attention.

A WAITER (30) runs ahead of them to the table they're aiming for, argues with the people sitting there, and then they all get up and leave. Other wait staff rushes out with clean plates and napkins and cups just as the heroes begin to sit down. All the staff has big fake smiles. The heroes sit down laughing.

INT. FREDDY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Freddy walks into his 1-room apartment. The paint is cracked and there is water damage on the wall. He sets the groceries on the counter then hangs his coat up, smoothing out any wrinkles.

INT. SUPERHERO HEADQUARTERS - EVENING

The superheroes return to the guild. Frank has a bottle from the restaurant. They throw their coats over couches or on the floor. They go into the kitchen and start getting more drinks.

INT. FREDDY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Freddy puts the frozen meal into the microwave. He watches it slowly spin.

INT. SUPERHERO HEADQUARTERS - EVENING

The superheroes have a collection of empty bottles and cans around them on the floor or on tables. They are opening more all the time. Some spill and they all laugh and go get more.

INT. FREDDY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Freddy washes the fork and knife he used, throws away the packaging from the microwave dinner, and takes the trash out.

INT. SUPERHERO HEADQUARTERS - EVENING

Blasto and Frank wrestle on the ground while Kate yells at them, angry. Moments later they're all hugging singing a drinking song and holding up bottles in toast.

INT. FREDDY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Freddy stops by his turtle tank and feeds SPEEDY THE TURTLE (106) some fresh greens. He pats Speedy's shell, curls up on the couch with some blankets, and turns out the light.

INT. SUPERHERO HEADQUARTERS - EVENING

Blasto is passed out on the couch. Katana Kate staggers to the hallway, looks back at Frank, then shakes her head and leaves. Frank sits on the balcony with a bottle of liquor and takes a drink.

INT. FREDDY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Freddy wakes up and gets out of bed. He does some stretches.

FREDDY

Got to limber up. Number one
cause of a pulled muscle is
improper stretching!

He can't reach his toes and occasionally loses balance. Freddy stands up and looks through the glass at Speedy.

FREDDY

Good morning pal! Time to get
that cheddar!
(pauses)
Er, well, cabbage. Time to get
that cabbage!

Freddy steps into the kitchen area and hums a few off-tune notes as he preps the coffee pot.

FREDDY

Gotta get my brew, get my morning
how ya do...

He sets a frying pan on the stove and gets eggs and cheese from the fridge.

FREDDY

You know, I saw this video the other day. It said people in Japan live to be a hundred and something just cause they eat so much fish.

Freddy pulls a can of sardines from the cabinet and looks at it, but he puts it back. He pulls out a jar of jelly from the fridge and then pops two pieces of bread into the toaster.

FREDDY

I don't know about that though. Turtles live for hundreds of years, right Speedy? And you don't eat fish... do you?

Freddy pauses while cracking eggs into the frying pan. He leans toward and pushes his glasses up higher on his nose.

FREDDY

Do you eat fish? I wouldn't want to be depriving you of... Eh, I'll look it up later.

He stirs the eggs once and begins grating cheese.

FREDDY

They say you gotta eat for your body type though, and I'm pretty sure cheese is my body type.

Freddy sprinkles cheese on the eggs and puts them on his plate. Freddy puts jam on the toast, puts them on his plate, and turns to the tiny TV on the kitchen counter. A news report about the superheroes trashing a restaurant last night plays, but Freddy changes the channel.

Some eggs left in the frying pan start to smoke. The smoke alarm beeps and Freddy shoves the pan into the sink. He opens the tiny window and begins to wave smoke out.

Speedy looks unconcerned.

EXT. CITY STREETS - MORNING

Freddy exits his apartment and walks down the street. Trash clutters alleyways. Graffiti covers building walls. But Freddy smiles at everyone he meets and waves cheerfully.

He stops at a dumpster where TERRY (65), a homeless man, is just waking up. Freddy drops a dollar and change into the man's cup.

FREDDY

Mornin Terry. Looks like it's gonna be another beautiful day!

TERRY

Man, Freddy, why you gotta be so cheerful so early!

FREDDY

Just gotta keep lookin for that silver lining, pal. It's there somewhere.

Freddy sets off down the street as Terry sits up and sips the coffee.

TERRY

Thanks, Freddy.

A few blocks down Freddy stops at a newspaper stand and buys a bundle of newspapers from the newsstand. At the intersection, Freddy hits the button and waits on the light. A MUGGER (19) in a mask sneaks up behind Freddy and puts a knife to his back.

MUGGER

Gimme your money! I ain't afraid to use this!

FREDDY

Morning Charlie. You know this isn't helpful, right?

MUGGER

I'm not Charlie! Money! Now!

FREDDY

Ok Charlie, calm down.

Freddy pulls out a wallet and hands it over.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

You could be doing a lot better
for yourself. What about your
paintings from high school?

The mugger takes the wallet and backs away.

MUGGER

They just ain't selling man, and
I've got no time for-- Wait, I'm
not Charlie! I'm a criminal!

The mugger turns and runs down a side alley.

FREDDY

(yelling)

See you tomorrow Charlie.

The mugger runs into an alley. In the wallet with a few dollars
is a brochure for a community college. The art classes are
circled in red. He smiles and stuffs it into his pocket.

INT. SUPERHERO HQ MAIN FLOOR - MORNING

THE ELDEST (67) exits the elevator onto the main floor of the
superhero headquarters. The place is trashed. He adjusts a
crooked painting like he's done this 1000 times before. He walks
to the kitchen to turn the water off and closes the fridge.

THE ELDEST

At least nothing is burning this
time.

He turns to go into his office. The lights are soft, the desk
is mahogany, and books line the walls. An ornate clock hangs on
the wall. He closes the door behind him.

INT. FREDDY'S FAMOUS COMICS - AFTERNOON

JEREMIAH (36) leans against the register with his back to
Freddy. He is skinny, pale, wears a fedora, has a scraggly
beard, and is drinking coffee.

FREDDY

You seen the new Razor's Edge yet?
Issue 101, it's over by the--

JEREMIAH

Read it. Not impressed.

Freddy frowns and looks at a copy of Razor's Edge.

JEREMIAH

You see what they did to my coffee shop?

Freddy rolls his eyes at Jeremiah's back.

FREDDY

The one on 57th and Oak?

JEREMIAH

Best non-fat soy milk chai latte in town. It used to be, anyway. Now I gotta drink this filth.

Jeremiah tosses his half-empty drink into the trash can.

JEREMIAH

I've been saying it for years, and I'll say it again: We'd be better off without them.

FREDDY

But that guy would have killed people if they didn't--

JEREMIAH

Maybe. Maybe not. Maybe he was just getting a non-fat soy milk chai latte.

Jeremiah glances back at Freddy then turns to face him.

JEREMIAH

Those super-morons think they are above the law, fighting people in the streets, living like they do. Have you seen how they live? Didn't you see that leaked vid of some contractor fixing their headquarters? They're animals. And they should be treated as such.

They stare at each other until Jeremiah throws up his hands and walks towards the door.

FREDDY

They're not all bad.

Jeremiah stops at the door and spins around to face Freddy.

JEREMIAH

You worship monsters and you're so brainwashed you can't even see it.

Jeremiah storms out as a DELIVERY GUY (26) walks in.

DELIVERY GUY

Mornin Freddy. What's his problem?

Freddy walks out from behind the register. He rubs his hands in anticipation and goes to hold open the door to the back room.

FREDDY

Jeremiah just has issues.

Roger pushes the dolly to the table in the back and starts unloading boxes.

DELIVERY GUY

Well now you've got issues too. Sign here.

Freddy laughs and signs. The delivery guy walks out while Freddy opens boxes.

FREDDY

Let's see what we got this time.

He starts pulling comics out and sorting them into stacks.

FREDDY

Ooh, a Calico Killer issue 32.
This one had the printing error.
I know a guy who's been looking
for one of these.

He sets the rare comic to the side.

FREDDY

All right... Scorpion Boy, The
Deadly Duo, Star Squadron... And
what have we here?

Freddy reverently pulls out a comic in an old plastic sleeve.
The plastic is so aged it's hard to tell what's inside.

FREDDY

What are you hiding, friend?

He lays it on the table. He slowly lifts the plastic flap and
eases the comic book out of the protective sleeve.

FREDDY

There, not too bad. Some
discoloration here and there. No
bent pages, which is good. The
staples aren't rusted yet, but
might be a good idea to take them
out.

A piece of paper falls out of it and flutters to the ground.

FREDDY

Oh, more secrets?

He carefully lays the comic book down and picks up the folded
paper from the floor. He unfolds it and reads: "Superhero
Application Form." His eyes get wide.

FREDDY

Is this real? It can't be.

INT. FREDDY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Freddy sits on the edge of his bed in his PJ's looking at the application.

FREDDY

I wonder if they'd let me in.

He looks up at a framed comic book on the wall. It's an original 1960's Mr. Brawny with an autograph across the front.

INT. CANON CITY CONVENTION CENTER - 1980's DECOR - DAY

CHILD FREDDY (10) stands in line next to FREDDY'S DAD (37) waiting on autographs. He wears a home-made mask and a bed sheet tied around his neck as a cape.

ATTENDANT

Next, please.

Freddy and his father walk up to the table and MR. BRAUNY (43) stands up to shake their hand.

MR. BRAUNY

Hello there, Mr. Middleton, right?
How's the family?

Freddy's father grins widely and rocks back on his heels. He holds his hat in his hands, crumpling it nervously.

FREDDY'S DAD

Yes sir, I'm surprised you remember. I tell my boy all about the time you saved us that day at the bank. You're his hero.

YOUNG FREDDY

I'm gonna grow up to be just like you some day!

MR. BRAUNY

(laughing)

I bet you will! Why look at those muscles!

Freddy flexes as hard as he can.

FREDDY'S DAD

Well we don't want to take up all of your time, but it's Freddy's birthday and well...

MR. BRAUNY

Birthday? Well, how old are you son? Judging by all those muscles you must be about 24 or 25 by now.

Mr. Brawny and Freddy's father share a conspiratorial wink.

YOUNG FREDDY

I turned 10 today!

Mr. Brawny pulls a comic book from under the autograph table and signs it.

MR. BRAUNY

To Freddy, Happy birthday. From Mr. Brawny. How's that?

Mr. Brawny hands the signed comic book to Freddy who is jumping up and down.

YOUNG FREDDY

Oh wow! Thanks Mr. Brawny! This is the best birthday ever!

INT. FREDDY'S FAMOUS COMICS - AFTERNOON

Freddy is at his cash register and gives someone their change. He puts their comics in a plastic bag then waves as they walk away.

When he closes the cash drawer, the application is under it.

FREDDY

OK, Name: Freddy the Fantastic!

Freddy scribbles on the application.

FREDDY

Height... Weight... Location... Bla bla
bla. Oh, here, superpower. Wait,
what's my superpower? Wonder if
they require... Nah!

Freddy thinks for a moment then waves his hand and keeps
writing.

INT. FREDDY'S FAMOUS COMICS - AFTERNOON

Freddy sits at the counter, head in one hand, the other hand is
carefully going over the application to double check. Not many
people are in the shop. Jeremiah leans against the counter
watching the people browse.

JEREMIAH

Look at them all. Mindless
consumers. Their whole life
revolves around making money or
spending money. It's a ruthless
cycle.

Freddy says nothing. He doesn't appear to have heard.

JEREMIAH

Did you see the latest figures?
Superheroes have cost the
taxpayers an average of \$3,400
each. Just this year!

Freddy still says nothing. Jeremiah glances back at Freddy. He
takes off his fedora and scratches his head.

JEREMIAH

What are you reading anyway? Are
those tax forms?

Freddy is in a trance. Jeremiah cranes his neck to see what the
paper is.

JEREMIAH

Superhero application form?
Where'd you get that? Your
fanboys opening up a new club?
They don't get enough love from
the press anymore so they need
some more... Hey, I'm talking to
you.

Jeremiah waves his hands at Freddy.

JEREMIAH

You in there? Hello, anybody
home?

Jeremiah grabs the paper to read for himself. He holds it out
of Freddy's reach while he reads out loud.

FREDDY

Hey, give that back!

JEREMIAH

(ignoring Freddy)
Hmm... Name: Freddy the Fart.

FREDDY

That's not my name!

JEREMIAH

Location: worst comic book store
ever.

FREDDY

Will you stop it!

JEREMIAH

Superpowers: none.

Freddy folds his arms and snorts.

FREDDY

You don't need superpowers.
Catman didn't have superpowers.

JEREMIAH

No, but he was a zillionaire.
Freddy, you talk about these
people like they're gods. They're
not! You want so badly to be
them, but they're bad people.

Freddy stares back at Jeremiah unflinching.

FREDDY

Everybody has good in them. Some
people just need a little help
finding it. Like you.

Freddy smiles at Jeremiah and sticks out his tongue.

JEREMIAH

Fine. Go fill this thing out and
show up on their front step.
They'll laugh you out of town.
They'll never take you in because
they're heartless jerks.

Jeremiah slaps the paper down on the counter and stalks out of
the store angrily.

FREDDY

Might have crossed the line there.
Whoops. He'll be OK.

INT. CANON CITY CONVENTION CENTER - AFTERNOON

Vendor booths and displays crowd the area. ATTENDEES, some in
costume, wander around talking or waiting in lines. Freddy
patiently waits in line to get approval signatures on his
superhero application form from the superheroes.

He gets closer and we see BLASTO, FRANK THE TANK, and KATANA
KATE (31) signing autographs with big fake smiles on.

ATTENDANT

(looking bored)

Next.

Freddy rushes forward holding out copies of the superhero
application. He smiles ear to ear and talks a mile a minute.

FREDDY

Hi! My name is Freddy and I found
this application to join the-

Frank interrupts without making eye contact. He looks bored.
His fake smile is slipping. He begins signing the form without
even looking at it.

FRANK THE TANK

What's your name buddy?

FREDDY

Well, I'm Freddy and I need your
signature here to--

FRANK THE TANK

Oh boy, a super-fan! That's super
neat, pal! Here's your signature!

Frank pushes the paper back to Freddy and is already reaching
for the next one.

FREDDY

Oh, well thanks, but don't you
want to know why it's--

FRANK THE TANK

That's great pal, thanks for your
support!

The attendant motions Freddy to the next superhero. Katana Kate
smiles weakly at Freddy but her canned speech comes out too fast
and all in one breath.

KATANA KATE

Hello, there traveler, what can
Katana Kate do for you?

Freddy squares himself in front of the table and attempts a
formal Japanese bow to Kate. Kate rolls her eyes but hides it
when Freddy stands up again.

FREDDY

It is an honor to meet you. I've read all your comics and I always thought that--

KATANA KATE

Oh, thank you! I always love hearing from my fans! Hey, watch this!

She leans forward with over-embellished ninja moves and snatches the application out of Freddy's hands.

KATANA KATE

Hi-yah!

With a flourish, she signs it then half bows to Freddy without getting out of her chair before turning to the next person in line.

FREDDY

But you didn't-

KATANA KATE

Go in peace, old one.

Freddy shrugs and turns to the last hero at the end of the table. Blasto seems to be lecturing a WIDE-EYED KID (8) while flexing his muscles as much as possible for his MOTHER (33).

BLASTO

So I hit him with my trademarked two-punch combo, Justice and Fury..

He kisses each bicep as he names his arms.

BLASTO (CONT'D)

And down he went. And that's why you should never do drugs!

The child's Mother herds him away as she stares over her shoulder at Blasto's chiseled physique. She blows Blasto a kiss which he grabs mid-air with a wink. But as soon as she is out of sight he composes himself, completely forgetting about the woman as he turns to Freddy.

BLASTO

Never do dru-- Wait, how old are you? I thought this was children's hour.

FREDDY

I'll be forty-four next--

BLASTO

Well, maybe drugs are OK once in a while. But make sure to pay your taxes!

Blasto fixes him with a steely glare. Freddy audibly gulps before shoving the application forms at Blasto.

FREDDY

Oh yes, every year! I love following the rules! In fact, that's why I'm here, to get the proper signatures--

BLASTO

A law-abiding citizen, eh? That's great, just great! Now let's keep the line moving for the kiddos, ok?

FREDDY

Ok, yes, I'll just, oh wait, I need your--

Blasto rips the papers from Freddy's outstretched hand. He never breaks eye contact with Freddy as he scribbles his signature across the papers.

BLASTO

Just this once, but you remember to not get in line when it's children's hour next time buddy, you got me?

Freddy nods rapidly as he timidly reaches for the application forms. But Blasto has already forgotten Freddy as the next fan pushes forward to the table.

Freddy smooths out the papers across his ample belly as he quietly makes his way to the exits, saying excuse me and pardon me, and holding the door open for a large group who was coming inside.

INT. SUPERHERO HEADQUARTERS - MORNING

Freddy pokes his head in the front door of the superhero headquarters, then seeing nobody at first walks in. He is in his best suit, though it is a little old and fits poorly. He carries a folder with his application inside. The lobby is empty except for a SECURITY GUARD (55) snoozing at the reception desk. Freddy presents himself, but when the guard keeps snoring, he clears his throat. Again, louder. A third time, this time stomping the floor for emphasis

SECURITY GUARD

Wha... Who?

He sees Freddy and points off to the side before closing his eyes again.

SECURITY GUARD

Elavader's tha way...

Freddy can still smell the booze from last night's party on the guard's breath and takes a step back. Shaking his head he goes to the elevators.

On the top floor, he gets off into what looks like a frat house. The place used to be nice, but too many late-night parties have dulled the brass and chrome fixtures. Some lights don't have lampshades. Clothes and empty bottles litter the place. Somebody is stretched across one of the couches snoring loudly.

FREDDY

Hello?

The snoring continues unabated. Freddy wanders in. As he moves down the hallway he sees more signs of party. He steps into the kitchen to turn off the faucet at the sink. One of the burners is on with something burnt to a crisp in a pan on top. He turns off the stove and shakes his head as he walks down the hallway.

Finally, he makes it to a cleaner section of the building. An office door reads "The Eldest" on the front. Its door handle

and kickplate are polished, the wood isn't dented, it's remarkably different from the rest of the place. Freddy knocks.

THE ELDEST (O.S.)

Come.

Freddy opens the door and steps in. The Eldest is an older superhero in a three-piece suit sitting at a distinguished desk working on paperwork. He motions to the chair in front of him.

THE ELDEST

Sit, I'll be with you in a moment.

FREDDY

Why thank you.

At the sound of an unfamiliar voice, The Eldest looks up. He sets his pen to the side and folds his hands, studying Freddy as he sits down in front of The Eldest.

THE ELDEST

Who are you?

FREDDY

Good morning. My name is Frederick Middleton, but most people just call me Freddy. I am here to submit my application to the Superhero Guild.

To punctuate his last sentence, Freddy slaps the folder with his application down on the desk and pushes it over to the Eldest. The older man doesn't move a muscle but continues to study Freddy.

Freddy sits calmly in his chair, meeting the gaze of The Eldest as the clock slowly ticks in the background. All is quiet in the HQ since most of the heroes are still sleeping off last night's party.

THE ELDEST

How did you get in here?

FREDDY

Well, the door was open and this is the address provided on the application form, just there..

Freddy leans over and opens the folder, pointing out the address shown on the form. In the process, he knocks over a stack of papers and they go fluttering to the floor. The Eldest doesn't bat an eye.

FREDDY

Oh, sorry about that. Let me get those for you. I always say I should be more careful. Practice more... what does Blasto call it?

The Eldest idly glances down at the application form as Freddy, now on hands and knees, gathers together all the fallen papers.

THE ELDEST

Situational awareness.

FREDDY

That's it. He's always talking about that on the news. Kinda wish the bad guys would use some of that and stop destroying our city, right?

Freddy stands up with all the papers clutched in both arms. They are stickout at odd angles and many are crumpled. He puts the pile back on the corner of The Eldest's desk.

FREDDY

There, good as new. You know, I've seen these nifty little paper filing thingies in Mega Mart. You can color code and like... change their height or... Some even have pen holders!

Freddy stops talking and smiles broadly. After a few silent moments with no sound but the ticking clock, the Eldest slowly flips through the application paperwork.

THE ELDEST

What is your superpower?

FREDDY

I have the supernatural ability to do the best I can and stay positive in all situations!

The eldest doesn't react whatsoever but continues to look through the application form. Freddy tries to sit a little bit taller. The silence stretches and Freddy begins to fidget.

THE ELDEST

Why do you think we should let you in?

FREDDY

I just want the chance to prove that I can be an asset to the team.

The Eldest says nothing but as Freddy talks, he begins to look thoughtful. The silence stretches out again.

FREDDY

I have all the necessary signatures...

Freddy frowns at the superhero autographs that are scrawled across the whole page.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

Even though they're not exactly in the right places.

After another long pause, The Eldest reaches into a desk drawer and pulls out a pad of ink and a stamp. He presses the stamp into the ink and then carefully stamps APPROVED into the appropriate box on the application form.

THE ELDEST

Welcome to the team. You can move in tomorrow.

FREDDY

Oh, wow! This is great! Thank
you, sir, I promise I won't let
you down!

Freddy is practically bouncing with happiness as he gets up and makes his way toward the door. As he leaves he pauses and backtracks back into the office. He looks at the clock on the wall, checks his watch, then pulls the chair he'd been sitting in over to the wall. Climbing up he reaches behind the clock and adjusts the time.

FREDDY

There. That's better. I thought
it was a little off. See you
tomorrow!

As he shuts the door, the wind from the door closing pushes the precariously balanced papers off the corner of the desk again. For the first time, a small smile plays on the corners of The Eldest's mouth.

INT. SUPERHERO HEADQUARTERS - MORNING

The headquarters are quiet. Katana Kate and Blasto are in the kitchen. Frank the Tank is passed out on a couch. Other superheroes can be seen slowly waking up or still passed out here and there.

Freddy steps out pushing boxes on a dolly. He is humming to himself. He can't quite see over the top of the boxes and keeps poking his head around the side to see where he's going.

SUPERHERO KITCHEN - MORNING

Katana Kate and Blasto are on either side of the kitchen table comparing notes and drinking coffee.

KATANA KATE

What about this?

She points out something on a floorplan drawing.

KATANA KATE (CONT'D)

We could go in through the
ventilation and-

BLASTO

No good. They have pressure plates in there.

KATANA KATE

Well, send in someone who can fly.

BLASTO

And lose the air superiority?

Freddy goes past the kitchen entryway pushing the dolly of boxes. Katana Kate glances up.

KATANA KATE

Who was that?

BLASTO

(ignoring her)

We could send Mr. Electrode to fry their system. That would disable the pressure plates.

KATANA KATE

Did you see that guy?

Blasto finally looks up.

BLASTO

See who?

KATANA KATE

He was just... oh never mind.

Katana Kate looks back down at the drawing. As she turns away, Freddy walks past again with the empty dolly.

KATANA KATE

No, you can't do that.

Katana Kate grabs a different paper showing wiring schematics.

KATANA KATE (CONT'D)

If you apply too much power, these junction nodes here and here will lock up and then we'll all be screwed.

BLASTO

Maybe we'll save the vents for our escape. I don't like non-heroic exits, but it makes sense strategically.

KATANA KATE

(Rolling her eyes)

You and your flair. You're not happy unless we have pyrotechnics.

Blasto's hair turns to fire and his eyes glow red hot for an instant as he smiles. As his body returns to a normal temperature, he shrugs.

BLASTO

Can you blame me?

Freddy goes past the kitchen entryway again with more boxes. Blasto sees this time.

BLASTO

Looks like those supplies Ronny ordered finally arrived.

Katana Kate whirls around to look just as Freddy moves out of view.

KATANA KATE

(loud whisper)

That's the guy! About yea tall and kinda...

She motions how fat Freddy is with overly rounded motions around the stomach.

BLASTO

That's the one. He just looks like a delivery guy. Maybe a contractor to fix Frank's hole in the wall?

KATANA KATE

(laughing)

Which one?

A crash from down the hall wipes both smiles off their faces. While they're still looking at each other, Freddy half-runs into the kitchen.

FREDDY
(out of breath)
Hey, how's it going? Where are
the paper towels?

Both Katana Kate and Blasto are speechless. Freddy makes some hurry-up motions, then starts opening cabinets.

FREDDY
(holding up roll)
I found em, thanks though.

He begins tearing off wads of paper towels as he runs out of the kitchen. Blasto and Katana Kate just look at each other.

SUPERHERO HEADQUARTERS HALLWAY - MORNING

Freddy emerges from the hallway with an armful of wet paper towels, bent and bruised flowers, and shards of pottery. He disappears into the kitchen and re-emerges with a trash bag with one sad-looking flower sticking out the top. He leaves the bag in the hallway and movies off-screen toward the elevator.

Freddy comes back into the shot pushing the dolly full of boxes. As he passes the kitchen he slips on some of the water from the broken flower pot and rams the dolly into someone's door.

FREDDY
Sorry about that.

He corrects the dolly and continues down the hallway. Out of sight. Seconds later he returns with an empty dolly. The door he hit opens and a sleepy JAKE THE SNAKE (42) pokes out to watch Freddy go past.

Seconds later Freddy comes back into the frame with more boxes. As he gets near the kitchen he swings wide.

FREDDY
Watch the water... Watch the
water... Careful...

As he swings wide, the box on the top falls off and hits a door on the other side of the hallway.

FREDDY

Oops, my bad, I'll get that.

He grabs the box and puts it back on the dolly then continues down the hallway. As he returns with the empty dolly, the second door he hit opens and another sleepy hero steps out to see what the commotion was. SISTER GRIT (52), a thickly muscled woman in a nun's habit watches Freddy go down the hallway over reading glasses perched on the tip of her nose.

Freddy returns, this time pushing a terrarium down the hallway. The stand has wheels on it, but one of them is squeaky. He's pushing it extra slow because of the turtle inside.

Sister Grit and Jake the Snake are starting to look angry. The more Freddy pushes the terrarium, the more the wheel squeaks, and more people come out to see what's going on. Blasto and Katana Kate come out of the kitchen and join the crowd.

BLASTO

(angrily shouting)

Hey! What are you doing?

Freddy stops and turns around. At first, he looks confused, but then a big grin splits his face.

FREDDY

You all came out to say hi? Oh, this is great! You guys are the best!

Blasto looks confused for a second but then steps forward menacingly. The elevator dings behind the crowd of superheroes watching, but nobody looks around.

BLASTO

You have five seconds to tell me who you are and what you're doing here before I-

FREDDY

I'm Freddy, and I'm moving in.
Really nice place you got here.
Sorry about that plant...

Blasto is speechless. His menacing fist slowly lowers in confusion.

KATANA KATE

You're what?

The crowd parts as The Eldest walks through and stands beside Blasto.

THE ELDEST

He's moving in. Welcome to the
team, Freddy.

The eldest looks at Katana Kate and Blasto each for a few seconds with a measuring, guarded look, then begins walking down the hallway to his office. But he stops at the terrarium.

THE ELDEST

And this is?

FREDDY

That's Speedy. He's my turtle.

The Eldest bends down to look through the glass at the turtle.

THE ELDEST

(solemnly)

Welcome to the team, Speedy.

He straightens and continues down the hallway to his office. Freddy begins going around introducing himself to everyone and shaking hands.

INT. SUPERHERO HEADQUARTERS, FREDDY'S ROOM - MORNING

Freddy wakes up and half-sits up in bed on one elbow and looks around at his new room. As his eyes adjust to the light a big smile slowly creeps onto his face. He leaps out of bed and stands there ready for anything.

After a moment of hesitation, he taps his forehead with one finger and smiles ruefully at himself as he begins stretching.

FREDDY

Can't forget our morning routine.
Just cause we're in a new place is
no excuse to get lazy.

He begins doing morning stretches. His toe touches stop well short of actually touching his toes. He strains trying to touch them.

FREDDY

(grunting)

Number one cause... No pulled
muscles today...

Freddy stands up finally, waving his arms back and forth across his chest to stretch his shoulders. He walks to Speedy's terrarium and bends down to say hello.

FREDDY

Good morning, buddy! First day as
a superhero! Are you excited? I'm
excited!

Freddy walks out of the room in his PJs.

INT. SUPERHERO HEADQUARTERS KITCHEN - MORNING

Freddy walks into the kitchen and looks around. He opens the cabinets and grabs his old scorched pan instead of the superheroes nice clean pans.

He opens the fridge. Fancy ingredients and foods are inside, but he reaches for his cheap generic store-brand food.

Freddy puts his ingredients on the counter next to the stove. He snaps his fingers and smiles ruefully.

FREDDY

Coffee! Can't forget the coffee!

He looks around the kitchen for a coffee pot. He passes over a fancy espresso machine once before he realizes what it is.

FREDDY

Would you look at this fancy
new-fangled contraption...

He starts pushing buttons and pulling levers. Suddenly steam shoots out with a loud whistle and he jumps back knocking the frying pan off the countertop. He scrambles to stop the espresso machine from making noises. Eventually he does.

FREDDY

Whew... That was loud. Hope I
didn't wake anyone up.

Leaning closer, he sees directions.

FREDDY

OK, water goes in here... Coffee
grounds there...

Slowly he preps the machine and grabs a mug to sit under the spout. Soon the machine pours a shot of coffee into his mug. He frowns and holds the mug up to look inside.

FREDDY

That's not very much. Wonder if
it's broken. Oh well, I'll be
happy with what I've got.

Gingerly he takes a sip. His mouth puckers up, his eyes go wide and he stares at the mug in wonder. Slowly he swallows the espresso.

FREDDY

Wow! That's some coffee! I think
I'm going to make some more of
that!

He preps the machine again and puts his mug under it, then turns to the stove while the espresso works. He grabs some eggs and begins cracking them into the frying pan.

FREDDY

This is shaping up to be the best day ever! And I gotta start my day with a healthy breakfast.

Freddy stirs the eggs. He takes a sip of his espresso. He looks around the kitchen contentedly with a look on his face like he's finally where he's supposed to be. As he's looking around, he sees a TV.

FREDDY

Wonder what's happening in the world today.

He reaches up to turn it on. When he does it's at full volume and a ROCK SINGER (22) plays heavy metal music.

ROCK SINGER

Everything you do just sickens me!
You try so hard, but it makes me
wanna screeeeeeaaaaaamm!!!

Freddy claps his hands over his ears, but then frantically reaches up to try to find the volume buttons. When he finally finds the volume and turns it down, he flips it to the news. The NEWS ANCHOR (41) turns to the camera.

NEWS ANCHOR

In other news, crime is at an all-time high in the city. The chief of police yesterday released their quarterly reports showing a nine percent uptick in violent crimes.

Freddy is glued to the TV.

NEWS ANCHOR

With the release of this report, the blame game is in full swing. The police chief blames the super-

The news anchor puts her hand to her ear and listens for a second.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

Oh, hang on a minute here folks,
I'm being told we have a breaking
story.

The News Anchor nods, then someone hands her a paper from off-camera. Freddy is mesmerized. The eggs begin to lightly smoke. Freddy doesn't notice.

NEWS ANCHOR

It appears that the Eleventh
National Bank is currently being
robbed! Maurice Fitzpatrick is
live at the scene.

The TV shows a REPORTER (33) filming with his camera on his phone. Behind him masked criminals are casually wading out of the smashed front window of a bank carrying stuffed duffel bags.

REPORTER

That's right, Sandra, I'm here at
the Eleventh National Bank on
Broad street where these criminals
have broken in with little to no
resistance. It looks like-

The reporter turns and realizes the criminals are walking right behind him.

REPORTER

Sir, excuse me sir! Channel
nineteen. What is your motivation
for this heinous crime?

The CRIMINAL (28) stops and waves to the phone.

CRIMINAL

What up Canon City! Thug
liiiiifeeee!

The criminal holds up the duffel bags and does a little dance.

REPORTER

Sir, you could be put away for
life for this crime, why did you
do it?

CRIMINAL

Bro, nobody's gettin put away.
 The superheroes, they party all
 the time. They're not gonna see
 this till they wake up this
 afternoon with a hangover. All we
 gotta do is set our alarms and
 it's free money.

The criminal waves again and jogs away to catch up with the others. Freddy is disgusted and turns the TV off.

BLASTO (O.S.)

What is with all the friggin noise
 so friggin early!?

Blasto comes in yelling before he's even entered the room. He's still in a bathrobe and rubbing sleep out of his eyes.

BLASTO

What the heck are you doing in
 here? It's so early!

Freddy smiles as soon as he sees another person.

FREDDY

Good morning! I was just making
 some breakfast. It's the most
 impo-

BLASTO

Dude, your eggs.

Freddy turns around to see his eggs catch fire. Freddy leaps over and grabs the pan, shoves it in the sink, and turns the water on. Blasto watches, dumbfounded, as Freddy puts out the fire. Without a word, Blasto turns and leaves, shaking his head.

FREDDY

(sighing)
 Every time. Every. Single.
 Time.

Suddenly, an alarm goes off through the whole facility. It's much louder than a simple fire alarm.

FREDDY

Yeah I know, fire.

A few people run through the hallway past the kitchen without stopping. Confused, Freddy shuts off the water in the sink and turns off the stove burner, then wanders out to see where they're going.

INT. SUPERHERO HEADQUARTERS SITUATION ROOM - MORNING

A large room at the center of the headquarters is filled with equipment, computers, and multiple huge screens. Some screens cycle through live traffic cameras, some show news reports, and some are off.

The largest screen in the middle now shows ALERT as the superheroes are filing in and gathering around. Blasto pushes his way to the front and taps a few keys at a computer terminal. The alarm fades and the central screen changes. It shows three supervillains and a map of downtown Canon City. A COMPUTER voice begins giving details.

COMPUTER

At 6:38 this morning Daniel Turner, alias Diesel Dan, was located downtown with two known associates. Clarence Abernathy, alias Doctor Professor, and Suzan Smith, alias Suzie Two-Shoes, have both previously been apprehended working with Daniel turner on mega-heists.

FRANK THE TANK

Oh, I hate that guy. Doctor Professor? Worst name ever. Come on...

A few of the other heroes chuckle. Many are still in pajamas or bathrobes. Some sip coffee. All are unconcerned with the situation; this is just business as usual for them. They're paying attention, but calm, not anxious. Only Freddy looks anxious or on alert.

BLASTO

Since you love him so much, you can take this one, Frank. Take Mister Mercury with you to counter Suzie's disguises. And we need one more. Any volunteers?

All the heroes look around like they're trying not to get picked. MISTER MERCURY (32) in a bright purple bathrobe sighs and walks over to the equipment lockers. He hangs his robe inside a locker and looks in a mirror on the inside of the locker door. His face shifts to look like two different people one after the other. Finally, he settles on a third one and nods approvingly.

As soon as Blasto asks for a volunteer Freddy's hand shoots up.

FREDDY

Ooh, I'll go!

BLASTO

(ignores Freddy)

Anyone? Need one more for this mission. Anybody?

Freddy squirms where he's standing, holds his hand up higher and hops a few times to get Blasto's attention.

FREDDY

Me! Pick me!

Blasto sighs and pinches the bridge of his nose. He doesn't look up when he answers Freddy.

BLASTO

What are your superpowers again, Freddy?

The other superheroes turn to look at Freddy. He stands a little straighter and tries to look heroic.

FREDDY

I have the power to stay positive in all situations and do the absolute best I can. Anytime, anywhere!

FRANK THE TANK

What are you going to do, send
them your thoughts and prayers?

The other superheroes laugh loudly. Freddy smiles cheerfully till he realizes they're laughing at him, and his smile begins to slip.

BLASTO

Frank, you pick someone, I don't
have time for this.

Blasto turns to the computer and starts typing.

FRANK THE TANK

Jack, you're up. Get your gear
and let's go. We're gonna need
something to tie them up once
we're done.

JACK THE ZIPPER (29) makes a face.

JACK THE ZIPPER

Always me with the restraints...
Needa get everyone some handcuffs
or something.

Everyone is ignoring Freddy. Superheroes are going back to their morning routine. The three selected for the mission are at the lockers getting their equipment. Blasto finishes at the computer and leaves. Soon it's just Freddy standing there.

FREDDY

(looks around)

That was probably a good call.
That zipper guy is handy to have
in a fight. Plus, now I get to
enjoy my breakfast! There's a
silver lining in every dark cloud,
yes sir.

Freddy's pep talk seems to cheer him up and he smiles before he walks out toward the kitchen.

INT. THE ELDEST'S OFFICE - MORNING

The Eldest watches Freddy walk out of the situation room via a screen on his desk. He presses a button and the screen recedes into his desk. He opens a drawer and pulls out a folder with Freddy's superhero application inside and reviews the paperwork.

THE ELDEST

In all situations? What is your
breaking point, Mr. Middleton?
How far can you take it?

INT. SUPERHERO HEADQUARTERS COMMON AREA - MORNING

Freddy walks out of the kitchen drying his hands on a towel. He throws the towel across his shoulder and looks around. Looks like a frat house: empty cans and bottles, loose clothing, lamps without shades, etc.

FREDDY

If I can't fight crime, I'll fight
grime. A clean house is a sign of
a clean conscience.

He gets a big trash bag and starts picking up trash. When he's done, he leaves and returns with a laundry basket. He picks up Blasto's uniform.

FREDDY

Oh, this looks like Blasto's. I
bet he'll appreciate it if I wash
this for him!

Freddy looks around to see if anyone else is watching. He's alone. He drapes the uniform over his chest and strikes a heroic pose.

FREDDY

Watch out, bad guys, it's Super
Freddy!

He frowns. Katana Kate walks into the room behind Freddy and smirks.

FREDDY

That's no good... Freddy the
Fantastic! No... I need something
more normal. Ooh, what about-

KATANA KATE
(sarcastically)
Watcha doing Freddy?

Freddy jumps and whips the uniform off. He holds it up inspecting it.

FREDDY
Yep, that needs to be restitched.

He turns to Katana Kate.

FREDDY
(innocently)
Oh, hi there. Just cleaning up a little. Looks like Blasto's uniform has a tear in it, needs to be patched up.

KATANA KATE
Uh huh, sure.

She squints at him and holds up her hands framing Freddy with her fingers.

KATANA KATE
But you? No, you need a cape.
Something retro.

Freddy stares into the distance, smiling, imagining himself in a superhero uniform.

FREDDY
Yeah... A cape...

Katana Kate laughs and turns to leave.

KATANA KATE
Ha! Imagine Freddy in a cape. What a joke.

Freddy is lost in his imagination as he resumes gathering laundry. He's still smiling.

FREDDY
Yeah, imagine me in a cape.

INT. SUPERHERO SITUATION ROOM - MORNING

The alarm goes off again the next morning. Everyone piles into the situation room again, most still waking up. Blasto comes in wearing a bathrobe. He's looking for something. Freddy waits near the front of the crowd, ready to volunteer.

BLASTO

All right, who do we have today...
Computer, report.

COMPUTER

The Canon City Prison was breached last night. The suspects tunneled underneath the compound, up into solitary confinement, and freed Electro-Magnificent. The prison guards didn't realize anything had happened till they brought him breakfast this morning.

Blasto wraps the robe tighter around himself as he looks at the computer screens.

BLASTO

We're going to need someone in that hole. And someone up top interrogating all E.M.'s friends.

Blasto reaches for his utility belt, but it's just his bathrobe and he frowns.

BLASTO

I'll take the interrogation job.
We got any volunteers for the tunnel?

Freddy's hand shoots up. Blasto rolls his eyes and ignores Freddy. He re-ties the bathrobe sash, which keeps coming undone.

BLASTO

Oh, and has anybody seen my uniform? I couldn't find it this morning.

Freddy's eyes widen and he quickly drops his hand. He slowly squeezes backward through the group of superheroes, trying to disappear. Once he's out of the group, he turns and runs out of the situation room.

BLASTO

I swear it was in the common room
during that party the other night,
but...

FRANK THE TANK

That party was off the chain.
Even I almost blacked out.

Blasto turns to Jake the Snake.

BLASTO

Jake, do you think you could
handle the tunnel? Need someone
quiet. Figure out who and what
we're dealing with and then report
back.

Jake the Snake slouches in a chair with one leg over the armrest. He wears leather pants and a leather jacket in dark subdued colors. He seems to blend into his environment. He ironically salutes Blasto without getting up.

JAKE THE SNAKE

Sure thing boss. I'll sneak in
smoothly, do some surveillance,
and slip back topside. They'll
never see me spying.

As they're talking, Freddy returns carrying a laundry basket.

FREDDY

I got your uniform right here!
Saw it yesterday and figured I'd
run it through the wash for ya.

BLASTO

You what now?

Freddy sets the laundry down and starts pulling out clothing. He finds Blasto's uniform and holds it up. The colors have run,

it's wrinkly and shrunk in weird places, very obviously much smaller than what Freddy had yesterday.

FREDDY

Uh oh...

BLASTO

(visibly shaking)

Freddy. What is that?

FREDDY

Um... Your uniform?

BLASTO

(starting to yell)

And why is it so small? And so pink?

Freddy drops the uniform and holds up his hands in a calming gesture.

FREDDY

Ok, I know you're mad. I can fix this.

Blasto points to the door, trying to control his anger.

BLASTO

Get out.

FREDDY

I've spent a lot of time with a sewing mach-

BLASTO

(yelling)

GET OUT!

Blasto's face and hands burst into flame. Superheroes near him jump to get away from his blast. Frank the Tank is the only one who doesn't move, and he isn't burned.

Freddy takes Blasto's advice and leaves, dragging the laundry basket with him.

The flames die down and Blasto is left panting with the mostly burnt bathrobe hanging around him in smoldering tatters.

FRANK THE TANK

Ya know what, I'll take this one.
You go cool down and-

Frank's words trigger Blasto and he whirls around to Frank, balling his fists and raising them to fight. Frank holds his hands up and talks fast.

FRANK THE TANK

I mean like have a cool one, ya
know? May as well start early.
Drink one for me, eh buddy?

Frank laughs nervously, but Blasto calms down. His fists drop, anger fades from his face, and he nods. Blasto turns and walks out. Frank watches him go, wary, like watching a rabid dog.

FRANK THE TANK

(to himself)
Good old Freddy. You put your
foot in it this time.

Frank turns to see Jake the Snake trying to slip out the door.

FRANK THE TANK

(louder)
Where do you think you're going?
Mission's still on. Come on, I'm
driving.

JAKE THE SNAKE

Just checking your situational
awareness.

The two of them go out by the lockers.

INT. SUPERHERO SITUATION ROOM - EVENING

Frank the Tank stumbles in with Jake the Snake's arm over his shoulder. Jake is hurt and both are worn out. Katana Kate is at the computer when they come in, sees them, and activates the intercom.

KATANA KATE

Need medical aid in the situation room. Frank and Jake don't look so good.

Jake coughs and looks up. His face is blackened on one side from burns. His right arm hangs limp at his side, blood drips down it.

JAKE THE SNAKE

Nonsense. The blood matches my eyes.

He falls down coughing. Frank can barely hold Jake up. Blasto and DR. PATCH (43) run in from the living quarters. Mr. Freon is carrying first aid supplies.

BLASTO

What happened?

FRANK THE TANK

It was an ambush. They figured we'd be coming and waited around a blind corner. I was upstairs with the prison guards when I got the call from Jake. When I got there they were gone and Jake was hiding behind some burned-out equipment.

JAKE THE SNAKE

(coughing)

I was able to hit Electro with a tracker dart before the explosives went off. Dunno if it's still stuck on him.

Blasto kneels down beside Jake and grabs his chin, forcing him to look at Blasto.

BLASTO

Did you see who was with him? How many were there? Where were they going?

Katana Kate puts her hand on Blasto's shoulder. Freddy runs in from the living quarters carrying armloads of towels and some bottled water.

KATANA KATE

Let the man breathe. He's lucky
he can still talk after those
burns.

Blasto looks up at her with anger, but then realizes she's right
and his face softens.

KATANA KATE

Right. Doc, lets get him patched
up.

Dr. Patch kneels down and starts peeling away burnt clothing and
applying medical gel to the burns. As he works his hands glow
and the burn marks start to fade.

FRANK THE TANK

I did learn that they're planning
something else soon. All the
villains in the prison seemed on
edge, trying to lay low. Some
looked like they had been packing
their things.

BLASTO

Might be good to send some heroes
over to bolster the guards.

Freddy waits beside Dr. Patch and fidgets restlessly.

FREDDY

Do you need anything doctor?
Water? Gauze? Some light?

DR. PATCH

(grumbling)

How about some space?

Dr. Patch applies a compress to Jake and stands up, turning to
Frank.

DR. PATCH (CONT'D)

What about you? You look beat up
but I don't see any burns on ya.

FRANK THE TANK

Mostly just smoke inhalation by
the time I got down there. Really
just need a pick-me-up.

DR. PATCH

You an me both, pardner.

Freddy drops the load of towels and runs out of the room.

FREDDY

OOH! I've got just the thing!
Old family recipe!

They all watch Freddy leave. Blasto shakes his head and turns
back to the group. Dr. Patch keeps watching the empty door
Freddy went through.

DR. PATCH

Does that boy ever give up? Seems
like his heart is in the right
place, but I sure wouldn't want
him on my team when the goin' gets
rough.

BLASTO

He's a bumbling idiot. I don't
know why The Eldest brought him on
board. Some pet project or social
engineering or something. You
know how he is. This'll run its
course and he'll tell us some wise
catchphrase we were supposed to
learn and things'll go back to
normal.

Katana Kate nods in agreement, but Dr. Patch doesn't seem
convinced.

JAKE THE SNAKE

Whatever he is, at least he
brought something useful. Slide me
one of those towels. Need to
scour this ash off my face.

Freddy comes walking back in, this time holding a tray with
several drinks on it.

FREDDY

My great grandfather Frederick
Archibald Middleton swore by this
tincture. It'll relieve sore
muscles and help you sleep while-

BLASTO

This isn't cocktail hour Freddy!
This is a medical emergency!

FREDDY

These aren't mixed drinks, it's
medicine. It's good for the soul.
It is also proven to promote
healthy-

Blasto steps forward and knocks the tray out of Freddy's hands.
Glasses and tray go flying, most of the glasses break.

BLASTO

Is this a game to you? What are
you thinking? These men were
almost killed tonight and you want
to make a few martinis?

FREDDY

They're not-

KATANA KATE

Blasto...

BLASTO

I don't care! I won't hear it!
Let the grown-ups deal with real
issues. All you ever do is get in
the way! Go clean the kitchen or
something, it's all you're good
at.

Freddy stands there shocked for a second before he snaps out of
it. He forces a smile on his face and starts collecting the
tray and glass shards.

FREDDY

You're right. When you're right,
you're right. I've got no medical
training. I'll just take this
back and let you guys have some
space. Good night everyone! Hope
you feel better, Jake.

Freddy leaves in silence. Dr. Patch has a carefully neutral look on his face and he studies his boots. Katana Kate looks at Blasto like she's seeing him for the first time. Frank has a small smile on his face.

JAKE THE SNAKE

(softly)

Night Freddy.

INT. FREDDY'S ROOM - MORNING

A drawer opens and Freddy's hands pull out a cookie tin. He opens the lid and stares at all the sewing supplies then turns away.

INT. SUPERHERO SITUATION ROOM LOCKER AREA - MORNING

Blasto and others equip gear for crime fighting. Blasto is dressed in sweatpants and hoodie of the same colors as his old uniform. Blasto holds his ruined uniform at arm's distance and grimaces. Blasto throws the uniform in the bottom of his locker and slams the door.

INT. FREDDY'S ROOM - DAY

Freddy is bent over a sewing machine. On the wall in front of him are various sketches for the uniform he's making. They have Blasto's colors. To the side is a page labeled "Improvements." Freddy holds up a jacket and pulls the sleeve at an awkward angle. It rips and he shakes his head. He bands back over the sewing machine.

EXT. BANK FRONT STEPS - DAY

Blasto and others fight against villains on the front steps of a large bank. Blasto and Kate hide behind a car on it's side that is burning. Frank comes running from the side and slides to a halt beside them. An explosion shakes the car and they look at each other with worried expressions.

INT. FREDDY'S ROOM - DAY

Freddy pulls a shirt from the sewing machine and slips his arm in one sleeve. He flexes and twists his arm this way and that. With a smile he pulls his arm out and pulls on the sleeve with both hands. It stretches without ripping. Freddy smiles and hangs up the shirt next to a jacket of the same color and design.

EXT. BANK FRONT STEPS - DAY

Frank braces against the overturned car and pushes it forward across the street like a shield. Blasto and Kate run, ducking, behind Frank and at the last minute jump out and begin attacking the villains. The villains are surprised and fall back under their assault.

INT. SUPERHERO SITUATION ROOM LOCKER AREA - EVENING

Freddy walks into the empty locker area and hangs the new uniform in Blasto's locker. He smiles triumphantly, closes the door, dusts hands off, and walks out of the room.

INT. POLICE STATION - EVENING

Blasto pushes a villain into the jail cell. He smiles triumphantly and dusts his hands off. His smile fades as he looks down at his clothes. His face contorts in anger and he slams the cell door and walks away.

INT. SUPERHERO SITUATION ROOM LOCKER AREA - EVENING

Freddy walks into the situation room as the heroes are returning from fighting crime. He's carrying a tray of hot drinks.

FREDDY
(cheerfully)
Welcome back everyone! How'd it
go?

Blasto looks at Freddy scornfully but doesn't answer.

KATANA KATE
We had some issues at first, but
nothing we couldn't handle.

FRANK THE TANK

Yeah we got em in the end. Man, I need a pick me up... Those got any kick, Freddy?

Freddy walks up to Frank and offers the tray.

FREDDY

Oh, no. These are pretty watered down. But they're good for what ails ya. Grandpa's famous recipe.

Frank is about to take one but grimaces when he hears Freddy and pulls his hand back.

BLASTO

What the heck is this?

Everybody turns to see Blasto holding the uniform that Freddy made.

FRANK THE TANK

(laughing)

Ha! The 80's called, they want their clothes back.

Katana kate smiles and shakes her head.

FREDDY

I know I messed up your uniform, so I made a new one for you! Hope you like it!

Blasto holds up the shirt and stretches it.

BLASTO

Spandex? What is this, throwback Thursday? And cargo pockets?

Blasto holds up the pants and sneers.

BLASTO

What, no sequins? Good grief, Freddy, nobody in their right mind would be seen in public wearing this.

Freddy's smile fades. Blasto and Frank both laugh. Blasto throws the uniform in the corner and the two of them walk away.

FREDDY

I just thought...

Freddy sighs and walks away. Katana Kate hasn't said a word but has a worried look on her face. She watches Freddy go then walks over and picks up the uniform and stares at it appraisingly.

INT. SUPERHERO KITCHEN - NIGHT

Frank the tank is searching for something. The more he searches the more frantic he gets.

FRANK THE TANK

Where is it? I know I didn't drink it all.

Freddy walks in with the drinks from earlier and starts pouring them out and washing the cups.

FREDDY

Whatcha lookin for?

Frank pauses and glances at Freddy. He looks down at the drinks Freddy is pouring out, and grabs one that's still full. He takes a sip and his eyes narrow.

FRANK THE TANK

(menacingly)

What did you put in these?

Freddy turns to him, excited that someone is finally interested in his home remedy.

FREDDY

Oh that's Grandpa's Famous-

FRANK THE TANK

(interrupting)

Whats. In. Here.

Freddy pales and gulps audibly.

FREDDY

Just some honey and tea.

FRANK THE SNAKE

And?

FREDDY

A little whiskey I found in the cabinet. There wasn't much left.

Frank starts shaking with anger

FRANK THE TANK

Show me!

Freddy backs up from Frank till he gets to the trashcan. He pulls out a whiskey bottle and hands it to Frank. Frank looks at it and crushes the glass cup in his hand.

FRANK THE TANK

(yelling)

That was a MacGlennon reserve!
There's only 20 of those in the world!

FREDDY

(softly)

19 now i guess...

FRANK THE TANK

I'm gonna kill him. Right now.
I'm gonna-

Katana Kate walks in.

KATANA KATE

Hey guys, what's going-

She sees the rage on Frank's face, looks at the empty bottle, then looks at the cups on the kitchen counter.

KATANA KATE

(softly)

Freddy, you should leave. Now.

Freddy carefully sets the bottle down and backs out of the kitchen. Frank stands there shaking then grabs the empty bottle

and cradles it like a child. He sinks to the floor crying softly.

INT. SUPERHERO SITUATION ROOM - MORNING

The alarm is going off. Heroes come stumbling into the room, groggy and grumpy. Frank is suffering from withdrawals. Freddy is the only one awake and cheerful.

FREDDY
(cheerful)
Good morning everyone!

Everyone else stares at him angrily and Freddy realizes it and stays in the back of the group.

BLASTO
I'm getting too old for this.
Computer, whats the situation?

COMPUTER
At 9:27am this morning, Dozerman's Industrial Supply was ransacked by unknown assailants. Multiple large pieces of construction equipment were taken. Villain presence on site remains high as they wait for the air transport to return for more equipment. Recommend immediate interception and apprehension.

FRANK THE TANK
Can you turn down that thing's voice?

DR. PATCH
You alright over there, son?

Frank waves him away and Dr. Patch shrugs.

KATANA KATE
We need to get some people in the air. Frank's in no shape to go. Lets bring Murphee and Alice.

BLASTO

No, neither of them can fly. We need air support. We should take Jimmy.

KATANA KATE

Jimmy? He's great in a fight, don't get me wrong, but he's got the attention span of a golden retriever.

(looking at Jimmy)

No offense.

JIMMY THE KID (27) is intently watching a fidget spinner. When he hears his name he looks up like a deer in the headlights.

JIMMY

Hmm? What's that?

BLASTO

Well, yeah. But not Alice. She'll get so focused on the machinery that she'll forget about the bad guys.

ALICE "THE WRENCH" MALONE (38) adjusts the welding goggles on her head.

ALICE

No, yeah. He's right. But I still wanna go!

MANIAC MURPHEE (31) brushes the bright red hair out of his face. His grin shows too many teeth.

MANIAC MURPHEE

(standing)

I can go, I'll just use Alice's jetpack.

ALICE

(standing)

If anyone's gonna use it it'll be me!

BLASTO

Sit down, we're still deciding.

More heroes stand up and begin arguing, everyone talking over each other.

COMPUTER

The villain's air support is returning. Estimated departure of all enemy assailants in 23 minutes. Advising immediate departure.

Blasto is starting to glow red from his anger.

BLASTO

(shouting)

OK, everyone shut it! Alice and Murph, lets go.

The rest of the heroes grumble as they leave the situation room. The 4 heroes going to fight get geared up and leave. Freddy is left alone in the situation room.

FREDDY

So much argument. It's like they're not even- Wait a sec! I know how to fix this!

INT. SUPERHERO HEADQUARTERS - EVENING

Blasto and the others return from fighting the villains at the construction supply company. The Situation Room is completely redecorated. Furniture has moved, decorations have been changed, lighting has been altered.

BLASTO

What the...

KATANA KATE

Were we vandalized? By like, interior designers?

ALICE

I dunno, it's kinda nice.

MANIAC MURPHEE

(volume rising as he talks)

I don't like it, it's too calming!
Puts me at ease! I can't be
maniacle! AAARGH!

Freddy walks in carrying a painting. They all turn on him.

FREDDY

Hey, how'd the mission-

The superheroes yell at him simultaneously.

KATANA KATE

Did you do this?

BLASTO

You've got a lot of nerve!

MURPHEE

Too calming!

Murphee runs from the room holding his head.

MURPHEE (O.S.)

Its out here too!

FREDDY

(smiling)

You noticed my Feng Shui, I see.
I read that it's supposed to help
calm people so there will be less
arguments, more teamwork, and-

The more Freddy talks, the more frustrated Blasto gets.

BLASTO

(yelling)

You idiot! This is the worst
thing you've done yet!

KATANA KATE

You had no right. Who told you to
do this?

BLASTO

Whats next, huh? You gonna take out the computer? Turn it into a children's game so it's fun and inclusive?

KATANA KATE

Frank was right. This is just beyond me.

Freddy's smile falters.

ALICE

(looking at the equipment lockers)
Which one is mine?

FREDDY

I was just trying-

BLASTO

(interrupting him)
Well stop trying! I can't even-
I need a drink. Where's Frank?

Everyone leaves and Freddy is all alone again.

INT. SUPERHERO SITUATION ROOM - MORNING

The alarm is going off, superheroes run in and try to grab their equipment, but they're running into each other in a rush to get ready. Freddy is trying to show them how he set it all up but nobody pays him any attention. When they leave the place is a mess. Freddy sighs and begins cleaning it up.

INT. SUPERHERO HEADQUARTERS - EVENING

Superheroes come back defeated. Some are wounded. Morale is low. Freddy meets them with hot drinks and towels.

FREDDY

Oh no! Is everyone OK?

BLASTO

We would have been if you hadn't
"helped" us.

JAKE THE SNAKE

Seriously! We sucked out there.

ALICE

There's my toolbelt! Why was it over here? I was looking for this this morning.

BLASTO

We left here half-cocked this morning, and it's all your fault, Freddy.

KATANA KATE

Nobody had any idea where their equipment was. Why did you even do this?

BLASTO

And why haven't you put it back yet?

FREDDY

It's pretty simple. First you grab your uniform, then utility belts are next, then any large weapons or equipment, and finally the capes are right by the door to the hangar.

FRANK THE TANK

All I need is in my locker.

(opens empty locker)

Or, it was this morning.

BLASTO

For the last time, stop helping. Literally every single thing you've done here has made things worse. We were just defeated by the villains for the first time in months. Patch is hurt. The jet lost an engine. Kate nearly died.

FREDDY

But I-

BLASTO

If this is the kind of help you're giving us, you may as well go join the bad guys. You're helping them more than you're helping us.

Freddy slumps in defeat. He sets the drinks down and leaves.

INT. SULLY'S LAIR - NIGHT

SULLY SHARP (32) watches video footage of the superheroes getting defeated by the villains that afternoon. He smiles as the heroes are ambushed. A close up of Katana Kate reaching for her sword and it's not there makes Sully bust out laughing. He turns off the TV and thinks for a moment, then picks up the phone.

SULLY SHARP

Rocko! How's it going? How's the family?

(pauses to listen)

Listen, I got an idea. You see the heroes on the news tonight?

(pauses)

I know right?

(pauses)

My thoughts exactly! Listen, call the family and bring them in here, I have a proposition to make.

INT. SULLY'S LAIR - NIGHT

Sully sits at his desk as various villains come in and sit down in front of the desk.

SULLY SHARP

So. We've all seen how bad the heroes have been lately. It's no surprise that they're idiots, but lately they've been worse than usual.

The villains nod and seem interested.

SULLY SHARP

I say we join forces and use this
against them. They're having
trouble fighting against one or
two of us. Imagine if we had a
supervillain guild to match their
superhero guild?

The villains look at each other with surprise and hope.

SULLY SHARP

We could have like, evil
helicopters!

The villains lean forward smiling.

SULLY SHARP

And flamethrowers!

A VILLAIN (40) shakes his fist in the air.

VILLAIN 1

Yeah!

SULLY SHARP

And poison gas!

Another VILLAIN (35) stands and fist pumps the air.

VILLAIN 2

Oh yeah!

Another VILLAIN (37) raises his hand.

VILLAIN 3

And explosives?

SULLY SHARP

Absolutely!

A short VILLAIN (42) in the front raises both fists in the air
in victory.

VILLAIN 4

And spandex uniforms!

Everybody freezes and looks at Villain 4.

VILLAIN 4

Uh... leather uniforms? With spikes?

SULLY SHARP

There we go! Intimidating!

ALL VILLAINS

Yeah!

SULLY SHARP

Evil!

ALL VILLAINS

Yeah!

SULLY SHARP

Are you with me?

ALL VILLAINS

Yeah!

SULLY SHARP

The Evil Alliance is born tonight!

INT. SUPERHERO KITCHEN/SITUATION ROOM - MORNING

Alarm bells ring and the heroes go to the situation room. Katana Kate stops by the kitchen to say hi to Freddy, but he isn't there. She pokes her head in the common room but he isn't there either. She looks perplexed but shrugs and goes to the situation room.

Blasto has his back to the group and is leaning over the computer terminal.

BLASTO

The computer says it's a routine thing. Almost like these guys are getting lazy. Give me a couple of volunteers, no you still can't go Freddy.

Blasto turns around and glares at the back row, but is surprised that Freddy is absent.

BLASTO

Well this is a welcome surprise.
OK, who's going?

A few hands go up in the crowd of superheroes.

BLASTO

Great, uh... Oxyoron, how 'bout
you and... Stan?

A well-muscled man with ox horns slowly stands and rolls his
shoulders. OXYMORON (29) grins while he flexes.

OXYMORON

Stan! Yeah, we ain't fought
together since, what was it, last
June?

STAN THE STEAMER (31) wears a polo shirt and boat shoes. He has
a baseball cap on backwards and aviators in the buttons of his
polo.

STAN THE STEAMER

(pops his collar)

Brah, that was a sick fight! You
wanna practice our one-two combo
again?

OXYMORON

(laughs)

I'll wrinkle 'em up and you iron
'em out.

STAN THE STEAMER

Dude, this is gonna be so sick.
Let's roll.

The superheroes begin to disperse, but Katana Kate walks over to
Blasto.

KATANA KATE

Where was Freddy this morning?

BLASTO

Who cares? This morning was nice
without him.

KATANA KATE

I dunno... I think something is wrong.

BLASTO

No. This is the first time in months that nothing has gone wrong due to his meddling.

Katana Kate shakes her head and walks away. Dr. Patches is leaning against the door frame as she leaves.

DR. PATCH

I ain't no head doctor, but I think you're right. Better check on that little fella.

Katana Kate stares at Dr. Patch for a moment before disappearing into the hallway. Dr. Patches watches her go, then looks up to a window where The Eldest is watching from his office.

INT. SUPERHERO HEADQUARTERS FREDDY'S ROOM - NOON

Freddy is packing his suitcase. He finishes his clothes and turns to his closet to pack his cosplay materials into his convention backpack. When he opens it, he finds the new uniform he had made for Blasto. Overwhelmed, he sinks into a chair and stares at the uniform.

Someone knocks on the door. Freddy doesn't answer. They knock again then enter the room. It's the Eldest.

ELDEST

Missed you in the situation room today.

Freddy shrugs but doesn't say anything. The Eldest stoops down to look at Speedy the turtle.

ELDEST

So you've decided to leave, hmm? Can't say I blame you. It isn't easy, this job.

He sneaks a look at Freddy out of the corner of his eye, but Freddy just stares at the uniform in his hands.

ELDEST

I almost gave up once. I was young and brave and thought I could do anything. But during my first year here in the guild, I didn't win one fight against the enemy. Not one.

Freddy looks up now.

ELDEST

So I started packing. Just like you're doing. But Mr. Brawny, that was back when he was still around, he had a heart to heart with me.

The Eldest looks into a cardboard box and pulls out Freddy's framed and signed Mr. Brawny comic book.

ELDEST

Oh, you're a fan?

FREDDY

He saved us once. First Bank And Trust. I was only 9.

ELDEST

So he tells me that nothing good is ever easy. Nothing worthwhile is going to be a walk in the park. "You gotta fight!" he said, and flexed those muscles of his. Man he was strong.

FREDDY

What did you do?

ELDEST

I had to decide if I was going to be a guy in the superhero guild, or if I was going to be a hero. There's a difference, you know.

FREDDY
But I don't even have any
superpowers.

The Eldest puts the framed comic book back into the cardboard box.

ELDEST
That didn't stop me.

Freddy stares at the older man. The Eldest stares back and raises his eyebrows. Just before he leaves, a small smile plays on the edge of his lips.

INT. SUPERHERO KITCHEN - MORNING

Freddy is in the kitchen cooking. He moves with familiarity and a smile on his face. Katana Kate comes in and he makes her a cup of coffee.

FREDDY
Morning, Kate.

KATANA KATE
(yawning)
Morning, Freddy. Where were you
yesterday?

Freddy flinches and looks back at her nervously.

FREDDY
I uh, had a cold. Needed to work
on the, uh... Oh, the toast is up,
gotta run!

He grabs the toast and throws it on some plates that already had eggs and bacon on them. Then he hurriedly takes the plates out of the kitchen.

FREDDY (O.S.)
There's more for you if you want
some, help yourself.

INT. SUPERHERO HEADQUARTERS RESIDENTIAL HALLWAY - MORNING

Freddy goes to a few different doors and knocks and hands them a plate.

FREDDY

Egg whites only, with a little
swiss chard and extra olives. Bon
appetit!

Freddy moves to another door.

FREDDY

Extra bacon, extra cheese, extra
hot sauce, no vegetables, and a
dollop of lard mixed in with the
eggs when I was scrambling them.
Dig in tiger!

At the next door Freddy stops and takes a deep breath. He opens
the door and steps inside.

FREDDY (O.S.)

Mornin, Frank. Best hangover cure
ever: two raw eggs, some paprika
and garlic and-

The glass of raw eggs is thrown from out of the room and smashes
against the wall on the other side of the hallway. Freddy comes
scrambling out of the room.

FREDDY

Point taken, ok, well thanks, and
sorry, and I guess I'll see you
later, or maybe-

FRANK THE TANK (O.S.)

Wake me up one more time Freddy.
One more time and see what I'll
do.

FREDDY

Yep. Sorry. Good night. Or
morning. Or, well technically
its-

FRANK THE TANK (O.S.)

Freddy!!!

Freddy runs back down the hall and Frank's door slams closed.

INT. THE ELDEST'S OFFICE - NOON

The Eldest sits at his desk doing paperwork when Blasto, Katana Kate, and Frank the Tank walk in.

FRANK THE TANK

We gotta talk man. I haven't got a good night's sleep in like two months.

BLASTO

It's Freddy. That guy has got to go.

Katana Kate stays silent, but nods as the others talk.

ELDEST

What has he done? Has he broken any rules or hurt anyone?

FRANK THE TANK

He hurt me! He used my best bottle of scotch.

ELDEST

Freddy got drunk?

FRANK

Well, no. But he made some drinks with it.

ELDEST

Ah, his esteemed grandfather's tonic. Yes, it has helped my back a few times after I hit the gym.

FRANK

But he took it from me. It wasn't his!

ELDEST

He broke into your room?

FRANK

Well, no.

BLASTO

It's not just that. Its other things. He keeps trying to stick his nose in our business and keeps making things worse.

ELDEST

That's strange. It's almost like I hired him on here to be part of the team or something.

The others are silent. Katana tries to step away from the other two like she hasn't been mean to Freddy as well, but The Eldest fixes her with a stare and she freezes.

ELDEST

Well how many missions has he been on?

The others stay silent.

ELDEST

What about the tactical planning sessions?

Katana Kate looks at Blasto who just frowns.

ELDEST

(sighing)

Look. We're on the same team, right? You and me? You trust me, right?

Katana Kate and Blasto nod. Frank just crosses his arms and looks away.

ELDEST

I brought Freddy in for a reason. Why don't you give him a chance? Everything that he is doing, he does for you. He's only trying to help.

BLASTO

That's what he keeps saying!

ELDEST

Have you accepted his help?

The others look sullen.

ELDEST

Try doing things his way for one week. Just one week. I bet you'll be surprised.

Blasto looks at The Eldest for a long moment then slowly nods and leaves. Frank shakes his head and follows Blasto. Katana Kate waits and stares at the floor.

KATANA KATE

I should have said something. They were so- I'm sorry.

ELDEST

It's Freddy you should be apologizing to. But he's stronger than you think.

Katana Kate nods and leaves.

INT. SUPERHERO SITUATION ROOM - AFTERNOON

Freddy is cleaning up in the situation room. Blasto and Katana Kate and a few others walk in from the gym.

FREDDY

Oh, hey. Hittin the iron huh? Gettin in a little cardio just to keep in tip top shape?

BLASTO

I don't need your-

Blasto interrupts himself and looks up at The Eldest's window.

BLASTO

(sighing)

Yes. That's where we were. So um. What are you up to?

Freddy is surprised that Blasto isn't being mean, but recovers quickly.

FREDDY

Just reorganizing the equipment racks here. You said it was difficult the last time, so I am trying to come up with a better method.

BLASTO

(gritting his teeth)

OK. Show me what you got.

Frank the Tank looks at Blasto like he's gone crazy.

FREDDY

What, really? OK, well I figured capes get in the way, so they're last. But you start up here.

Freddy runs to the side of the room where the lockers were.

FREDDY

Then you can collect your gear as you go.

He walks down the new aisle he made and grabs and puts on various utility belts and masks and other superhero equipment.

FREDDY

Then heavy equipment over here at the end. And finally capes right next to the door. I've calculated it'll take 17 seconds at the slowest to get geared up and out the door if everyone is working together.

He walks over to the group of heroes wearing the mismatched collection of equipment.

FREDDY

Neat, huh? I saw something like this on one of those reality shows with the house builder family and-

BLASTO

(holds up his hand)

Don't. OK I'll admit it's an interesting concept. But don't push it. We'll see if it actually works.

FRANK THE TANK

Yeah right.

The others laugh and walk out with Blasto. But Freddy is just so happy they listened that he doesn't care.

INT. SUPERHERO SITUATION ROOM - MORNING

Computer is telling the heroes the details of the latest villain attack.

COMPUTER

Recommend immediate counterattack.

BLASTO

Right, we're going to need some big guns on this one. Computer says these goons are not the smartest, so if we just go in guns blazing they won't know what hit them. Any objections?

Freddy looks unsure, but doesn't say anything. Katana Kate elbows Blasto and nods in Freddy's Direction. Blasto looks at Freddy then up at The ELdest's window.

BLASTO

(sighing)

What do you think, Freddy?

A few people in the crowd gasp. Freddy is stunned, but then slowly speaks.

FREDDY

Well, that's just what Captain Crusader did back in the '80's and it was a trap. Looks like the same setup here. They're all out in the open but there's high rise building construction on either side. Easy to set up an ambush.

Some of the other heroes laugh.

BLASTO

You think Bonehead McGee is smart enough to set up an ambush? You're hilarious, Freddy. Why don't we leave the strategizing to the professionals.

Freddy smiles his weary smile and sits back down. The heroes suit up and head out.

INT. SUPERHERO HEADQUARTERS - EVENING

The heroes return defeated, wounded, dusty.

FRANK THE TANK

I've never seen Bonehead move that fast.

KATANA KATE

Or the Beasty Brothers ever work together.

BLASTO

Yeah, I think we have a big problem on our hands. But we can't do anything about it if we're always licking our wounds.

The Eldest walks in looking for something.

ELDEST

Have you seen my- Oh. Bad day at the office?

KATANA KATE

It was like they knew we were coming.

FRANK THE TANK

Like they had our playbook or something.

ELDEST

If only you had seen the ambush coming. From both sides. From the construction. That Freddy told you about.

The Eldest reaches in his pocket.

ELDEST

Oh, here it is, the pen I had misplaced. Well, carry on.

The three heroes look at each other as The Eldest leaves.

INT. SUPERHERO HEADQUARTERS - EVENING

The heroes sit in the common room nursing their wounds. Frank has a bottle of something strong.

FRANK THE TANK

There's no way he coulda known that. Lucky guess.

KATANA KATE

I dunno. Freddy does have an unhealthy infatuation with anyone wearing a cape. He's probably read all the comics.

BLASTO

He was spot on with his assessment.

Frank pours himself another drink.

FRANK THE TANK

Nah, beginners luck. Anyone could have seen that.

BLASTO

Did you see it? I sure didn't.
And now the jet has a hole in it
and Kate lost her favorite sword.

KATANA KATE

I'd sacrifice it again in a heart
beat to save someone.

(wistfully)

It was pretty though. With the
rose petals on the blade.

Freddy walks in with a tray of drinks.

FREDDY

Hey. Heard about tonight. I know
you don't like me in there after a
mission so I waited. Hot towel
anyone? No? Well good night.

Freddy doesn't expect them to say anything and turns to leave.

BLASTO

Wait, yeah I'll take a towel. And
what's in that tonic again?

FREDDY

Just some honey, vinegar, and a
little ginger to cover the taste.
My old grandad used to put in a
little bit of whiskey but I was
uh...

Freddy glances at Frank who is staring at Freddy with malice.

FREDDY

Informed we didn't have enough to
go around.

BLASTO

(chuckling)

I bet he did. Give me one, lets
try it.

Blasto takes the tonic, smells it, and immediately regrets it.
He puts on a fake smile and raises his glass in a toast.

BLASTO
To grandad!

Katana Kate and Freddy pick one up to toast with Blasto

(simultaneously)

KATANA KATE
To grandad!

FREDDY
To grandad!

They all drink. They all make faces and weeze a little after the drink goes down. Blasto finishes his off while Kate sips hers. Frank wears a disgusted look the whole time.

BLASTO
Wow! Anything that tastes that bad has got to have medicinal properties. OK, I'm off to bed.

Freddy starts gathering cups.

KATANA KATE
Leave them. We'll get them in the morning. Go get some sleep.

Blasto and Freddy head out to sleep.

FRANK THE TANK
He's changing everything. We had a good thing going and now...

KATANA KATE
(standing)
What's the problem? You want to keep getting beat up by the villains? Fine. But not me.

Kate leaves and Frank watches her go then takes a long drink straight for the bottle.

INT. SUPERHERO KITCHEN - MORNING - NEXT DAY

Freddy is in the kitchen doing his normal thing. Blasto wanders in.

BLASTO

Mornin Fred.

FREDDY

Hey, morning big guy. Hows the back?

BLASTO

Pretty good actually. That was the best night sleep I've had in ages.

Freddy hands him a coffee. Katana Kate comes in.

KATANA KATE

(smiling)

Morning losers.

BLASTO

Losers no longer. We need to work on some strategy.

FREDDY

Yeah these guys look more organized than they used to be. I wonder what's going on?

BLASTO

We can worry about the why later. For now we just need to figure out how to deal with them. We need to consult an expert.

KATANA KATE

Agreed. Someone who has seen their tactics before and can tell us what they're planning.

BLASTO

Someone well versed in the villains themselves too.

Freddy has been watching the exchange like a dog at a tennis match.

FREDDY

I'll go call The Eldest.

As he starts to go, Blasto puts his hand on Freddy's arm.

BLASTO

We were talking about you, bro.

KATANA KATE

You knew exactly what they were planning yesterday. If we had listened to you we wouldn't have gotten defeated.

Freddy is speechless. But as he's trying to decide what to say, the alarm bells ring and they all rush out.

INT. SUPERHERO SITUATION ROOM - MORNING

The superheroes rush into the situation room. Blasto looks at the computer screens as he runs by and barks a few orders. Superheroes run through the equipment section as Freddy showed them and are out the door in seconds. Freddy watches them go.

INT. SUPERHERO HEADQUARTERS - EVENING

The superheroes return. They are in good spirits.

JAKE THE SNAKE

Did you see them slithering away?
Seems the supervillains need some support.

Frank slaps Jake on the back in a good natured way, but Jake nearly falls over.

FRANK THE TANK

I love seeing the fear in their eyes when I rush them.

Jake gives Frank a calculated look walks away.

KATANA KATE

We were there like 15 minutes earlier than we usually are. On the way back I had Computer start analyzing our departure.

FRANK

Ha! Nerd.

Katana Kate shoots him an evil look but continues.

KATANA KATE

(reading from a tablet)

Jake was the fastest out the door. Which isn't surprising. Frank was the slowest. Looks like you were late getting in here too.

FRANK

Didn't hear the alarm.

KATANA KATE

(not looking up)

Uh huh. And the average time to get geared up was... Haha, would you look at that. He was right.

BLASTO

Who was right?

Kate points to Freddy who is just now entering the room with towels and drinks.

KATANA KATE

17 seconds. Average time.

Frank's smile turns into a frown, but Blasto seems to reassess Freddy in a positive light.

INT. SUPERHERO HEADQUARTERS - EVENING

The superheroes gather to celebrate breaking their losing streak. Freddy is the center of attention. Everyone is having a good time except Frank who keeps to the corner nursing a bottle of liquor. He keeps giving Freddy mean looks, but Freddy doesn't notice.

At one point, Blasto ignites his hands for some party trick and accidentally burns part of his uniform.

INT. SUPERHERO SITUATION ROOM - MORNING

The superheroes gather for another alert. Blasto is in his bathrobe.

FRANK THE TANK

Think that uniform might be a little drafty, bud.

BLASTO

Shut up man. I messed up my suit last night. You will have to go without me today.

Freddy perks up and walks over to a cabinet beside the computer.

KATANA KATE

We can't. We're going to need your blasts. They're holed up in the safe of a bank. Nobody else has the firepower to get them out.

BLASTO

Half of my suit is ash right now. What do you want me to do?

Freddy has something and walks up behind the superheroes.

FREDDY

You could always wear this. I know you don't like it, but in a pinch...

Blasto turns and takes the package from Freddy and opens it. It is the uniform Freddy made for him. Frank and a few others in the crowd snicker and Blasto looks at them sharply.

BLASTO

(maintaining eye contact with Frank)
Yeah. This'll work fine. I'd be happy to wear it.

Frank holds up his hands placatingly. They all go towards the lockers and get ready to go.

INT. SUPERHERO KITCHEN - EVENING

The heroes are gathered around the kitchen laughing. Most of them are in normal clothes again, but Blasto is still in his uniform.

BLASTO

I'm tellin you, this thing is awesome! I can move in ways I never thought I could before. That old suit was... I mean, look at this.

Blasto drops into a crouch and kicks like the Russian squatting dance.

BLASTO

I've got pockets for days. Never knew I needed to carry so much stuff, but then it's right here when I need it.

FRANK THE TANK

You look kinda dumb though.

BLASTO

Who cares. It's so useful.
(frowning)
Wait, no I don't. I look awesome! The pants have flames on the legs. You can't tell me that's not cool.

KATANA KATE

(deadpan)
Technically, flames are hot, Blasto.

Everybody but Frank laughs.

JAKE THE SNAKE

Perhaps Freddy will sew me up a shiny new suit as well. This leather doesn't stretch. Something with scales.

Others start chiming in on what they want. Frank grumbles and leaves the kitchen.

INT. SUPERHERO KITCHEN - MORNING - NEXT FEW DAYS

Blasto and Katana Kate and Freddy have breakfast in the kitchen.

INT. SUPERHERO KITCHEN - MORNING - NEXT FEW DAYS

The next day they're joined by a few more people.

INT. SUPERHERO KITCHEN - MORNING - NEXT FEW DAYS

The next day there are almost too many people in the kitchen. The Eldest even comes by.

INT. SUPERHERO HALLWAY OUTSIDE KITCHEN - MORNING

The kitchen is packed. People are standing in the hallway looking in. Frank wanders up, hungover.

FRANK THE TANK

What's going on?

DR. PATCH

Freddy is telling us all about the fight back in '92 between the Significant Seven and the Power Pact. Interesting stuff.

FRANK THE TANK

Friggin Freddy again. Everyone is so in love with that fat little jerk.

DR. PATCH

Did you know Hamish the Hammer defected mid fight? He was fed up with the newest member of the team. Liked it better when they were the Significant Six.

FRANK THE TANK

We don't need history lessons around here. This is bull. Get out of my way!

Frank shoulders past Dr. Patch and storms down the hall.

DR. PATCH

Doomed to repeat? I wonder.

EXT. CANON CITY BANK - AFTERNOON

Blasto flame-punches a villain out the front door of a bank vault. Katana Kate leads three more out behind him at sword point.

EXT. CANON CITY PRISON - AFTERNOON

Villains have taken over the prison and have guards tied up. They watch and laugh from the top of the walls as Frank punches the walls from outside. Jake the Snake slithers behind some villains who are distracted by Frank's yelling and he unlocks the main gates to the prison. A big group of superheroes sneak in the front gates and surround the villains before they realize what's going on.

EXT. CANON CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT - EARLY EVENING

A REPORTER (26) stands outside the police station as the superheroes bring in a group of handcuffed and tied up villains.

REPORTER

Here come the heroes now. Mr.
Blasto, sir! May we have a word?

Blasto hands off the villain to the police and walks over to the reporter.

REPORTER

How would you describe this new
wave of crime here in Canon City?

BLASTO

Well, it's getting serious. I,
we, the superhero guild, think
that the villains are up to
something. Been too much activity
lately and it worries us.

REPORTER

And how is the guild planning on dealing with this?

BLASTO

Well we've been working on our strategies, upgrading some of our equipment-

REPORTER

Like that outfit, I see, looking good!

BLASTO

(laughing)

Haha, thanks. But we're just trying to keep this city as safe as possible. It's our home too.

REPORTER

Have you seen the latest cover of Vain Magazine? You and the rest of the team look pretty good on the front.

BLASTO

Thanks, but we gotta remember we're not celebrities. We're public servants, just like the boys in blue over here.

Blasto looks over his shoulder and sees one of the villains struggling against the police officers.

BLASTO

Look I gotta help these guys, but thanks for your time.

Blasto trots back to the police and helps bring in the villains.

REPORTER

No, thank you. Well there you have it. Public servant number one helping to clean up the city. Back to you, Margaret.

INT. SULLY'S LAIR - NIGHT

Sully turns off the TV that had the news reporter talking to Blasto. He calmly sets the remotr on his desk and turns in his chair to face TONY RIGATONI (51) who stands in front of the assembled villains.

SULLY SHARP

Your men seem to be having some problems.

TONY RIGATONI

The heroes. They're different. They used to be a bunch of jerks all working against each other and it was easy.

SULLY SHARP

Seems like we're not the only ones finding the value of teamwork.

TONY RIGATONI

You need more guns. That worked the one time.

SULLY SHARP

That's not what I need.

TONY RIGATONI

More explosives?

SULLY SHARP

(smiling)

You're getting close.

TONY RIGATONI

What then?

SULLY SHARP

I need a vacation I think. Somewhere tropical. I need one of those cocktails with the little umbrellas in them.

A cover slides off his desk and a fancy drink emerges from the hole. It has a little umbrella.

SULLY SHARP

Oh! Yeah, just like this one!

He hands Tony the drink.

SULLY SHARP

It's on the house. Bottoms up!

Tony looks at the drink and back at Sully. He resigns himself to his fate and takes the drink. After a deep breath, he takes a sip.

TONY RIGATONI

Hey, not bad. Tastes like- AARGH!
Poison...

The man slumps in his chair and the drink splashes to the ground.

SULLY SHARP

(yelling)

Anyone else want to tell me what I
do or do not need? Come on!
Speak up!

Nobody says anything, and most avoid eye contact. Sully calms himself and straightens his clothes.

SULLY SHARP

What I need is a man on the
inside. After all, if you can't
beat em, make em join you.

INT. SUPERHERO HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Frank wanders the halls, drunk. He knocks on Blasto's door.

FRANK THE TANK

Hey, Blasto, it's me. What are
you doing?

BLASTO (O.S.)

(groggy)

What? What time is it?

FRANK THE TANK

Like 11 or something?

Blasto comes to the door, he had been asleep.

BLASTO

Dude, it's late. Go to sleep.

FRANK THE TANK

Nah man, the night is young! We got hours yet till the sun comes up. And I got this old bottle of-

BLASTO

Dude, no. It's too late. What if the baddies attack early in the morning? We gotta be ready for them.

FRANK THE TANK

But Blasto...

BLASTO

Seriously. Go to bed.

Blasto shuts the door.

FRANK THE TANK

I didn't wanna party with you anyway.

Some heroes pass Frank in the hallway and give him a wide berth.

FRANK THE TANK

What? See somethin you like?

They move on down the hallway.

FRANK THE TANK

(yelling after them)

Hey! You wanna party?

BLASTO (O.S.)

Go to bed, Frank!

Frank grumbles and walks down the hallway. He passes Freddy's door and makes a rude gesture.

FRANK THE TANK

It's all his fault. Good two-ey shoes. Good two shoe-ies. Whatever.

He takes a swig and moves on into the common room. Two heroes in there see him coming and leave.

FRANK THE TANK

That's right. This is my room. Get.

He looks around.

FRANK THE TANK

This used to be my kingdom. I could drink anyone under the table. Nobody could stand up to Frank.

He wanders out to the balcony.

FRANK THE TANK

Now nobody even tries. All going to bed early and gettin up when I used to go to sleep. All cause of Freddy.

He takes another drink, realizes the bottle is empty, and chucks it over the railing into the street below.

FRANK THE TANK

Someone should do something about that guy.

Frank's phone rings. He digs it out and looks at the caller ID.

FRANK THE TANK

Sully Sharp? Wonder what he wants.

INT. SULLY'S LAIR - NIGHT

Sully sits at his desk in his lair as Frank the Tank walks in.

SULLY SHARP

Frank! How's it going? Want a drink? You look like a bourbon kinda guy. On the rocks?

FRANK THE TANK

(wary, unsure)

Sure.

Sully makes Frank a drink and Frank sits awkwardly, looking around at the office.

SULLY SHARP

(handing Frank the drink)

So. Frank. How's the guild? Things are looking up over there!

FRANK THE TANK

No they're not. Things suck.

SULLY SHARP

But you're winning.

FRANK THE TANK

Yeah but things are different.

SULLY SHARP

What's different?

FRANK THE TANK

It's Freddy. The new guy. He's helping everybody win.

SULLY SHARP

But you're one of the leaders. You should be the one helping them win.

FRANK THE TANK

I was. I used to be. Now everybody loves that little fat creep. He doesn't even have any powers.

SULLY SHARP

That doesn't surprise me. The Eldest didn't accept my application, and I have like 20 superpowers. He's getting senile.

FRANK THE TANK

I know, right?

SULLY SHARP

What if I told you I could help you be strong again?

FRANK THE TANK

I mean, yeah. But aren't you like one of the bad guys?

SULLY SHARP

(waves hand)

Shades of gray, my friend. I still want the heroes to win. They need to win. That's what I'm offering you. Let me help you win again.

FRANK THE TANK

I dunno...

SULLY SHARP

Listen, I could set some guys up, make it an easy win, and none of freddy's tricks, just good old fashion Frank the Tank.

Frank looks dubious, but seems to be warming to the idea.

SULLY SHARP

It'd be just like old times. You at the front leading the way, busting through walls, kicking butt.

FRANK THE TANK

I miss those days.

SULLY SHARP

Bring them back then! What do you say? We could make Freddy look like an idiot.

FRANK THE TANK

I do like the sound of that.

SULLY SHARP

OK, here's what we're going to do...

INT. SUPERHERO SITUATION ROOM - MORNING

The alarms go off and the heroes rush into the situation room.

COMPUTER

Sully Sharp leads a contingent of 12 other villains in an assault on the First Canon Bank and Trust. Suspect unarmed and considered to be extremely dangerous. Psych profile shows strong hatred toward superheroes and lack of moral safeguards. Proceed with caution.

BLASTO

OK, folks. This is the big one. Sully has been nipping at our heels for years now, and it looks like he's finally making his move. We're gonna have to take the whole team on this one.

FRANK THE TANK

The whole team? Even him?

BLASTO

(glares at Frank)

Even him. He's part of the team. Which is more than I can say for you sometimes.

FRANK THE TANK

Whatever, man.

BLASTO
(turning to Freddy)
You up for this Fred? Your first mission.

KATANA KATE
(hands package to Freddy)
We got you something too.

Freddy opens the package and it's a uniform that matches the other hero's uniforms. Freddy looks touched.

BLASTO
You're part of the team, now, and we figured you should look the part.

FREDDY
I would love to. But my place is here. The team does better when I'm back here supporting.

Frank rolls his eyes and goes to the lockers.

BLASTO
You could still help from the jet, or...

FREDDY
My place is here. Go. I'll only slow you down, and you need to be in tip-top shape out there with Sully on the battlefield.

BLASTO
(nods)
Fair enough. We'll be back in 20 minutes. 25 tops.

Everyone laughs and the heroes go to the lockers and head out. Freddy waves.

INT. SUPERHERO SITUATION ROOM - AFTERNOON

Freddy sits in the situation room waiting on his friends to return. He is happy, sipping a hot drink, content.

The alarm goes off for a villain alert. Freddy looks around, but there is nobody. He hesitantly presses a button on the computer and the screen comes to life.

Sully Sharp's face fills the screen, he is right in front of the camera.

SULLY SHARP

Is this thing on? Oh, they answered. Hello heroes! Anybody home?

Freddy pulls the mic closer.

FREDDY

Uh, hello?

SULLY SHARP

Who are you? I thought that place was empty by now.

FREDDY

I'm uh... Freddy. What are you doing? Didn't the heroes go stop you? What happened?

SULLY SHARP

Wait, you're Freddy? You? You're the one who has caused all the problems?

Sully laughs so hard that he floats away from the camera and clutches his sides. He comes back after a few seconds.

SULLY SHARP

This is too good. Oh wow. Yeah, they came, but I had a few surprises for them. Don't worry, they're back at my place now.

FREDDY

What have you done!?

SULLY SHARP

You wouldn't understand, little man. The city doesn't need those so-called heroes. They rejected me. Me! I am the best. I can do everything they can do and more. But they didn't want me.

FREDDY

I know how you feel.

SULLY SHARP

How could you know? You're nothing! Frank said you didn't even have powers! You are an ant to me. I don't even know why I'm still talking to you. Enjoy being the only hero left, mister... whatever your name was.

Sully turns away from the camera and calls out to his villain cohorts.

SULLY SHARP

What? Yeah, go ahead. There's nobody left to stop us. Light it up! Lets have some fun!

An explosion shakes the camera and the line goes dead.

INT. SUPERHERO SITUATION ROOM - AFTERNOON - AFTER SULLY HANGS UP

Freddy is in shock. But soon he shakes it off and starts typing.

FREDDY

Computer, what's the nearest superhero organization?

COMPUTER

Mexico's Liga de Campeones is three hours away by plane. Montreal's Chevaliers Canadiens is showing offline, but they usually respond in less than 24 hours.

FREDDY

24 hours? Ok, call the Liga
Campo... how was it pronounced?

COMPUTER

Dialing.

The monitor shows DANTE DIABÒLICO (45) on a jet ski. A
beautiful WOMAN (22) sits behind him laughing.

DANTE DIABÒLICO

(yelling over the noise)

¡Hola? Oh hey, it's the
Americans!

FREDDY

Hi. Um, I don't know your name.
But we need help! Sully has-

DANTE DIABÒLICO

Whats that?

FREDDY

Sully Sharp has taken the team
captive! We need help!

DANTE DIABÒLICO

Oh that's too bad, man! Well
we're out here fighting crime too
so...

WOMAN

¡Vamos a tomar tragos de tequila!

DANTE DIABÒLICO

Yeah, we got, uh, bad guys all
over the place! Gotta go!

The screen goes blank as Dante hangs up.

FREDDY

Mexico sounds dangerous. I wonder
what that woman said. He must
have just rescued her. Computer,
what about the Canadians? Do they
have anyone on standby?

COMPUTER

I tried calling them during your conversation with the representative from Mexico. No response.

FREDDY

Are there any other superheroes left in the city?

COMPUTER

One hero shows on my scanner.

FREDDY

Really? That's great! Why didn't you say so earlier? Are they within range?

COMPUTER

Affirmative.

FREDDY

Well don't keep me guessing, what's their name? Who is this hero?

The screen suddenly shows Freddy's profile details.

COMPUTER

Frederick Middleton, aged 43. 5 feet 4 inches tall. 215 pounds. No known superpowers. No known aliases. Internal notes written by G. Patterson, alias The Eldest: Shows potential.

Freddy sits back in his chair and stares at the screen. A determined look comes on his face and he runs out of the room.

INT. SUPERHERO HEADQUARTERS FREDDY'S ROOM - EVENING

Freddy puts his uniform on. He digs an MP3 player from a box in his closet and puts the earphones on. He puts bolt cutters in his belt. He hangs a towel from his belt. He eats a stick of gum and puts the pack of gum in a pouch on his belt. He puts a sandwich in a zippered plastic bag in another pouch in his belt. He hangs a can of sunscreen on one side and bug spray on the

other side. He pats Speedy the turtle on the shell. Then he leaves.

EXT. CANON CITY - EVENING - LATER THAT NIGHT

Freddy walks out of the superhero guild and walks straight to the bus stop. He waits for it then boards. Others on the bus give him strange looks, but he looks determined and stares off into the distance. When the bus gets to Sully's lair, Freddy gets off.

INT. SULLY'S LAIR CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Sully stands outside holding cells. The superheroes, except Frank the Tank, all sit behind bars. Some are hurt or unconscious.

SULLY SHARP

I told you. I mean, you had to see this coming, right?

Sully waits for a response but nobody speaks.

SULLY SHARP

(laughing)

Of course you didn't see this. I mean, I'm me. I gotta say I'm surprised you guys didn't try to do something earlier. I've been recruiting for months now. My Evil Alliance has been growing with leaps and bounds.

Security monitors behind Sully show Freddy entering the facility. He walks in the front door, drops something, bends down to get it, and while he's bent over, a blade swings out of the wall missing him. He stands up oblivious and continues.

SULLY SHARP

Like the name? It's catchy. I know, I know, reminds people of the Evil Empire. You ever miss that group Kitty?

KATANA KATE

It's Kate.

SULLY SHARP

(ignores her and keeps talking)

But then you get this guy. He starts messing with my plan. I don't know what he did to you people, but whenever he shows up, you start kicking butt. Like you were always OK, but now you're good!

Another security monitor shows two guard dogs race down a hallway. On a different screen Freddy bands down like he's talking to the dogs. They arrive and he tosses them treats. They roll over and he pets their belly. He shakes his finger at them sternly and they sit obediently. Freddy moves on while the dogs lie down to sleep.

SULLY SHARP

That fight with the Tootsie Twins? They gave up crime, man. They went legit after the walloping you gave them. And here I thought this guy was giving you, like, fighting training or something. He's developed a new serum and given everybody new superpowers. That's it, I thought. He's a mad scientist! That's gotta be it!

DR. PATCH

What are you talking about?

SULLY SHARP

What's his name? Fernando. Fozziewig? The new guy you got a few months ago.

BLASTO

Freddy?

SULLY SHARP

Freddy! I thought you sneaky superheroes had an ace up your sleeve. But one of my new friends tells me the truth. He's nothing! He's a fake! You've all been blindly following an idiot, which I mean, you've been listening to that old geezer for years, so that one is on me. But he's here now too so don't worry. You'll see him soon.

Blasto rushes the cell door and tries to break out.

BLASTO

(yelling)

Where is he? What have you done with The Eldest?

SULLY SHARP

There's the Blasto I know. That calm, even tempered thing doesn't suit you. But listen, I got things to do, people to kill, busy busy busy... Come on, Frank, lets go.

BLASTO

What? Frank? Frank!

Frank the Tank steps out of the shadows and just shrugs at Blasto. He looks remorseful.

SULLY SHARP

What the? How did he get inside?

(turning to Frank)

You said he has no powers.

FRANK THE TANK

He doesn't.

SULLY SHARP

Well then how do you explain this?

Sully points dramatically to a security monitor where Freddy is climbing up on a desk. He pulls a wad of gum out of his mouth,

waves to the camera, and covers it with gum. Sully growls and storms out of the door.

SULLY SHARP

Do I have to do everything myself?

INT. SULLY'S LAIR LASER HALL - NIGHT

Freddy comes to a hallway with nothing obvious in it. He pulls out a can of bug repellent and sprays it in the air in front of him. The spray shows lasers criss-crossing the room. He uses the spray to find more lasers and carefully steps around them and exits the hallway.

INT. SULLY'S LAIR SECURITY DOOR - NIGHT

Freddy comes to a room with an intricately locked door. A computer screen beside the door asks for a password.

FREDDY

(typing)

Hmm... Sully Sharp Is Amazing.

The computer screen shows an error message.

FREDDY

What about... 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

The computer screen shows "ACCESS GRANTED"

FREDDY

(laughing)

Thats the combination of my luggage!

He goes through the now unlocked door.

INT. SULLY'S LAIR LASER HALL - NIGHT

Sully Sharp walks into the hallway with the lasers. He punches a code into his watch and the lasers deactivate.

SULLY SHARP

(sniffing)

Is that... bug spray? What the heck is wrong with this guy?

He runs through laughing with Frank following him.

INT. SULLY'S LAIR SERVER ROOM - NIGHT

Freddy walks into a room filled with computers and server racks. He walks to the door on the other end but then pauses. He pulls out his MP3 player and looks at the computers.

FREDDY

I really should update my
playlist. These two songs are
getting kinda old.

He walks to a computer and plugs in his MP3 player and starts browsing the internet. Before too long, though, popups begin spamming all over the computer screen. Multiple ADVERTISEMENTS start playing over the speakers at the same time.

ADVERTISEMENT 1

Feeling sad, depressed, lonely?
Just call our pharmacy and we can
get you the little purple pill for
a fraction of the retail cost.

ADVERTISEMENT 2

Hot singles in your area are
looking for you. Click here to
see them in all their unfiltered
glory.

ADVERTISEMENT 3

We've been trying to reach you
about your car's extended
warranty.

Freddy unplugs his MP3 player and backs up.

FREDDY

I uh. Probably shouldn't download
things illegally. Yeah. I'll
just... Maybe I should turn it off
and on again?

He reaches behind the computer and pulls a plug and everything goes dark. A second later the lights come on and the computer screen just shows the blue screen of death.

FREDDY

Well, guess I shouldn't dilly
dally. Gotta go save my friends.
Heh. Oops.

He leaves.

INT. SULLY'S LAIR SECURITY DOOR - NIGHT

Sully comes across the same locked door Freddy did. He tries to enter the password.

SULLY SHARP

12345. Enter. Go! What is wrong
with this thing?

Frank points to a security camera with gum on it.

FRANK THE TANK

Think the short fat one was here.

SULLY SHARP

How did he- Whatever, I can fix
this.

Sully begins typing furiously on the computer screen. At the same time he speaks into his watch and his voice is broadcast over the whole facility.

SULLY SHARP

Freddy? Oh Freeeedy? I know
you're out there. You think
you're smarter than me. You got
in and got lucky a few times. But
don't think that you can outsmart
me! I am, literally, the most
talented person in this
hemisphere. Science backs it up.
You categorically, emphatically,
positively cannot win.

INT. SULLY'S LAIR CNTROL ROOM DOORS - NIGHT

Freddy comes to the doors outside the control room where the heroes are held. Sully's voice comes over the intercom, but Freddy can't hear because of his headphones. He pulls out the bolt cutters and tries to open the door, but can't get a good

place to snip. He bangs them against the door a few times to no effect.

INT. SULLY'S LAIR SECURITY DOOR - NIGHT

Sully has gained access on the computer terminal and can see Freddy on a camera.

SULLY SHARP

He's not even listening to me.

(turning back to Frank)

Is he deaf too?

Frank shrugs.

SULLY SHARP

All security to the control room front doors. Apprehend Freddy and hold him for me. I want to meet this guy face to face.

INT. SULLY'S LAIR CONTROL ROOM DOORS - NIGHT

Security guards surround Freddy, who is oblivious. He's tied his bath towel around the two door handles and is pulling with all his might. He loses his grip and falls to the ground at the feet of the guards.

FREDDY

Oh, hey fellas.

They grab him and take him into the control room and tie him to a chair.

FREDDY

I guess I can't blame you. It's your job, right? And you're doing a pretty good job. This knot is tight!

The guards grunt but remain silent. Freddy looks around awkwardly trying to keep the conversation going.

FREDDY

Sooooo. You got pretty good benefits I guess. This guy's got money. You have like, 401k matching?

GUARD 1 (33) snorts and rolls his eyes.

FREDDY

No? Well at least medical, yeah?

GUARD 1

You kidding? We are on state-provided insurance. This guy don't give us sh-

GUARD 2 (25) beside Guard 1 hits his shoulder.

GUARD 2

Shut up dude.

GUARD 1

Whatever, man. This gig sucks. Only reason I'm here is cause of the prison work release thing.

GUARD 3/CHARLIE

This is better pay than mugging people, but it's kinda crappy hours.

Freddy hears a familiar voice.

FREDDY

Charlie? Is that you?

GUARD 3/CHARLIE

(lowers his mask)

What's up Freddy... Man, what have you gotten yourself into? This is a bad dude!

FREDDY

I could ask the same about you. How's the art going?

CHARLIE

Just sold my first piece last week. Get a few more and I'm quitting this job.

FREDDY

Why not quit now? This guy doesn't have your best interests at heart. No insurance? No benefits? And I bet he yells at you a lot.

The guards all nod and look at each other.

CHARLIE

Man I've taken about 20 wallets from this guy and he just kept tryin to help me. I don't wanna turn into this jerk we're working for.

Charlie bends over and unties Freddy.

FREDDY

You guys straighten up, ok? I know some people, and you wouldn't want to get into a fight with them.

As he's talking, Freddy walks over to the holding cells and presses the open button. The whole superhero guild steps out and glares at the guards. Charlie puts his weapon on the floor and backs up.

CHARLIE

Hey, I turned in my resignation before they showed up. Technically I'm not a bad guy any more.

Katana Kate and Blasto smile.

BLASTO

Any friend of Freddy's is a friend of mine. Go on, get out of here.

The guards all leave out a back entrance.

INT. SULLY'S LAIR CONTROL ROOM OUTSIDE DOORS - NIGHT

Sully and Frank walk towards the control room.

SULLY SHARP

How is he doing this? He bypassed my security system, emasculates my dogs, got through the lasers. Who the heck is this guy?

Sully is ranting so loudly that he can't hear the conversation ahead of them, but Frank can. He stops walking and lets Sully go on without him. Frank disappears into a side door.

INT. SULLY'S LAIR CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Sully walks confidently into the room and freezes when he sees the superheroes.

SULLY SHARP

Where is that little- Oh, hey guys. You're out.

BLASTO

(wry smile)

You had to see this coming, right? Of course, you didn't see this. I mean, you're you.

The superheroes surround Sully, who falls to his knees.

SULLY SHARP

What is going on? Am I dreaming? How could this guy beat me? I mean look at him!

Freddy is trying to untangle his headphone cords from the hood of his sweatshirt. He looks up.

FREDDY

What?

SULLY SHARP

He's an imbecile! I'm so much
smarter than him! I'm stronger!
Faster!

Freddy scratches his backside.

SULLY SHARP

Better looking too...

KATANA KATE

You don't have everything though.

SULLY SHARP

Yes. Yes I do. I am better than
that fat slob in literally every
way. How is he better? Can he
like shoot lasers from his eyes?
What is it?

The Eldest steps forward out of the group.

THE ELDEST

Do you know why I denied your
application? You've got no heart.
You look at people and see pawns
on a chess board. You see
dividends and expenses. You see
assets and liabilities.

SULLY SHARP

Well, yeah.

THE ELDEST

Freddy looks at people and he sees
people.

BLASTO

The reason we're fighting
together, why we're winning, is
that Freddy helped us see people
too. We're not out here for the
press. We're not here to look
good.

KATANA KATE

We're here to save people. You aren't the reason I fight. They are. Freddy brought humanity back to the guild. You would have only destroyed it.

Blasto puts special handcuffs on Sully and they all leave.

INT. SUPERHERO HEADQUARTERS FRANK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Frank is drinking in his room. Blasto and Kate walk in.

FRANK THE TANK

Oh, hey. Back from your mission? How'd it go?

BLASTO

You did us dirty, Frank.

FRANK THE TANK

What are you talking about?

Katana Kate pulls out her phone and taps it. A recording of Frank and Sully plays.

FRANK THE TANK

(recording)

It's Freddy. The new guy. He's helping everybody win.

SULLY SHARP

(recording)

But you're one of the leaders. You should be the one helping them win.

FRANK THE TANK

(recording)

I was. I used to be. Now everybody loves that little fat creep. He doesn't even have any powers.

Kate taps her phone again and it goes silent.

FRANK THE TANK

Oh. That. Well he did us dirty first. If he hadn't come along we'd all be-

BLASTO

All be what? Still in those cells? Dead? Passed out in the hallway after another of your benders while Sully destroyed the town?

FRANK THE TANK

Take it easy, man, I didn't think-

BLASTO

No you didn't think. What the heck, man? We were a team! We were brothers! And you get all butt hurt just cause someone comes along trying to help?

FRANK THE TANK

I didn't want his help! Things were fine! We were winning! We were...

Frank slumps down on his bed.

BLASTO

We were. But we're not any more. You gotta go, man.

FRANK THE TANK

But.

(turning to Kate)

Kate?

Katana Kate just crosses her arms and shakes her head. Kate and Blasto leave and Frank gets up and punches a wall.

INT. FREDDY'S FAMOUS COMICS - MORNING

Frank is working at Freddy's old comic shop. He looks older and thinner, his clothes are a little worn and are cheap quality. A delivery has come in and he is setting up a cardboard fold-out of Normal Man: Freddy in his uniform.

A KID (9) walks into the store. He looks like he's just been beaten up: scuffs on his face, tears in his clothes, etc. Frank sees him and calls him over to the counter. He gets a washcloth and starts cleaning the cuts on his face.

FRANK THE TANK

Hey, man, what happened?

KID

Just some bullies. I left my extra money at home and they beat me up. I usually remember.

FRANK THE TANK

You pay them every day?

KID

They're not there every day. But most days.

FRANK THE TANK

I could teach you some self-defense moves, you know. I used to be a uh, cop. You stand up to them and they'll stop messing with you.

KID

That's what my mom says. But I don't think I can. I'm always going to be a skinny weakling.

FRANK THE TANK

I didn't think I could change either. But then someone helped me.

Frank stands up and sets the cardboard Normal Man in front of the counter.

FRANK THE TANK

Did you know I met this guy once?

KID

No way! He's my favorite!

Frank reaches into a box from the new shipment and gives the kid a comic book that's still in the plastic sheath.

FRANK THE TANK

Here. From one fan to another.
On the house.

KID

Wow! Thanks, mister.

He opens the plastic and pulls the comic book out. As he opens it up, a folded piece of paper falls out of it. The kid picks it up and unfolds it. It's the same superhero application that Freddy had. Frank leans forward with a pen.

FRANK THE TANK

Need a pen?

Section 4 - Annotated Bibliography

References:

Aladdin. Directed by John Musker and Ron Clements. Walt Disney Pictures, 11 Nov. 1992.

Aladdin tells the story of an underdog persisting through great trials to show his true character. He had both great poverty and great riches, but in the end he chose to give up everything he had in order to save the ones he cared about. And when it was all said and done, even though he had the wealth reinstated and permission to marry Jasmine, He still chose to honor his promise and use his third wish to set the genie free. *Aladdin* shares many of the same characteristics of my main character, Freddy: he is optimistic, honest, and loving.

Avengers: Endgame. Directed by Anthony Russo and Joe Russo. Marvel Studios, 22 Apr. 2019.

Avengers: Endgame is filled with superheroes and villains who were examples for my characters. Iron Man made the ultimate sacrifice to save the galaxy. The superheroes from various teams didn't all like each other, yet they ended up working together in order to stop Thanos. My characters have to learn the same lessons.

Avengers: Infinity War. Directed by Anthony Russo and Joe Russo. Marvel Studios, 23 Apr. 2018.

Avengers: Infinity War is also filled with superheroes. In this movie, all of them suffer a string of defeats as Thanos ramps up his plan to kill half the galaxy. Then in the end, he wins and the Avengers are defeated. My characters have to suffer defeat a few times as well in order to really understand that they are not working together.

Captain America: Civil War. Directed by Anthony Russo and Joe Russo. Marvel Studios, 12 Apr. 2016.

Captain America: Civil War shows superheroes at odds with each other. Most of the time heroes fight against evil, but in this movie, they fight each other. My characters are in conflict with my main character for nearly the whole movie, and one of them never resolves his differences until he gets kicked out of the superheroes' guild.

Captain America: The First Avenger. Directed by Joe Johnston. Marvel Studios, 19 Jul. 2011.

Captain America: The First Avenger may be the movie with the most selfless character in this whole list. Steve Rogers was chosen for the Super-Soldier Serum, not because of his bone structure or genetics, but because of his strength of character. He regularly went out of his way to do the right thing even before he was bulletproof. Freddy, while never bulletproof, has the same character. Yes, he has his flaws and struggles with depression from time to time, but it is his willingness to help in the face of others mocking him that eventually wins over the hearts of many of his malefactors.

Captain America: The Winter Soldier. Directed by Anthony Russo and Joe Russo. Marvel Studios, 13 Mar. 2014.

Captain America: The Winter Soldier is a tale of redemption. Bucky, who is Steve Rogers' long-lost friend and thought to be dead, shows up as an assassin in the present day. Rogers goes against the wishes of the Avengers and heads out to try to stop Bucky and bring him in for help. He believes that his friend wouldn't act like this, and tries to help. In the end, Rogers saves Bucky. None of my characters go full evil, even Frank the Tank who betrays his friends in secret. But almost all of the superheroes need to be redeemed from self-destructive lifestyles and narcissistic attitudes.

Casey, Dan. "Hugh Jackman Wolverined So Hard In Logan That He Passed Out While Filming." *Nerdist*, 4 Mar. 2017. <https://nerdist.com/article/logan-hugh-jackman-patrick-stewart-x-men-interview/>. Accessed Feb 9, 2023.

This article was to show how unrealistic Hollywood's body image is. Hugh Jackman had dieted and exercised so much that he was unhealthy. He didn't have enough body fat on him to sustain a long day in the sun and he fainted on set one day.

"Courage." Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/courage>. Accessed 9 Feb. 2023.

Fitzgerald, Tony. "The Economics Of The Hugely Popular Hallmark Christmas Movies." *Forbes*, 24 Dec. 2021. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tonifitzgerald/2021/12/24/the-economics-of-the-hugely-popular-hallmark-christmas-movies/?sh=1bb8ed293f34>. Accessed Feb 9, 2023.

The Hallmark channel is almost a byword or an inside joke because of the sheer quantity of movies they make that have cookie-cutter similarities. Yet nobody can deny that they sell. This article was in support of research of the Hallmark Channel.

Kung Fu Panda. Directed by John Stevenson and Mark Osborne. Dreamworks Animation, 15 May 2008.

Po the panda thinks he isn't good enough or strong enough or fast enough to be the Dragon Warrior that prophesy foretold. If Captain America is the most like Freddy in his strength of character, Po is most like Freddy in his physical flaws. But Po finally comes to believe that he can do what it takes to save his village. Freddy also comes to the conclusion that he has what it takes to save the superheroes.

"Marvel Movies In Order: How To Watch All 40 MCU Movies and Series Chronologically." *Rotten*

Tomatoes. <https://editorial.rottentomatoes.com/guide/marvel-movies-in-order/>. Accessed Feb 9, 2023.

This article was found in research of the success of the marvel movie franchise.

"Number of People With Master's and Doctoral Degrees Doubles Since 2000." *United States Census Bureau*, 21 Feb 2019.

<https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2019/02/number-of-people-with-masters-and-phd-degrees-double-since-2000.html#:~:text=About%2013.1%20Percent%20Have%20a%20Master's%2C%20Professional%20Degree%20or%20Doctorate>. Accessed Feb 9, 2023.

This article was found in support of my research into the unrealistic image that Hollywood portrays about superheroes. The number of degrees shared among members of the Avengers is ridiculously high compared to the average number of people with various levels of higher education according to the US Census Bureau.

Pattap-21567. "The 50 Highest Grossing Movies of the 2010s (Worldwide)." *IMDB*, 11 Apr. 2018.

<https://www.imdb.com/list/ls026040906/>. Accessed Feb 9, 2023.

This article was found while researching the most successful movies of recent years. The results of the research show that superhero movies do indeed draw large crowds. This means I might be able to get my message out to more people than if I had a gritty thriller or western or some other genre.

Rudy. Directed by David Anspaugh. TriStar Pictures, 18 Sept. 1993.

Rudy tells the tale of a man with learning disabilities who went on to achieve his dreams. Rudy was not as smart as other people, and less athletic, but his hard work both in the classroom and on the field led to him achieving his dream of playing in a Notre Dame football game. Freddy is also a little bit less than average but also achieves his dream of working with superheroes.

Spider-Man. Directed by Sam Raimi. Columbia Pictures, 29 Apr. 2002.

In this first of the 'modern' Spider-Man movies, we see Peter Parker come to terms with his new powers. But even though he has extraordinary new abilities, he still embodies some of the beatitudes that Jesus taught during his Sermon on the Mount. Parker is meek and merciful. These are characteristics that Freddy exemplifies as well.

Spider-Man: Homecoming. Directed by Jon Watts. Columbia Pictures and Marvel Studios, 28 Jun. 2017.

Homecoming showcased not only Peter Parker but his best friend Ned Leeds. Ned is an example of someone doing great things even though they don't exhibit Hollywood's ideals of beauty or physique. This is a perfect example for Freddy.

The Amazing Spider-Man. Directed by Marc Webb. Columbia Pictures, 13 Jun. 2012.

This iteration of Spider-Man showcased Andrew Garfield as the web-slinging hero. Garfield helped further emphasize Peter Parker's character and adherence to the beatitudes. Much like Freddy does.

The Avengers. Directed by Joss Whedon. Marvel Studios, 11 Apr. 2012.

The Avengers shows the formation of the superhero group. It provides many examples of the heroes failing to work together, group dynamics when they do, and overly charged egos learning humility. It is a great example of how the superheroes in *Normal Man* will interact.

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. Crossway, Good News Publishers, 2001.

The Bible was used mainly to research Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. The character strengths that Jesus taught about are the lessons Freddy is trying to teach to the superheroes.

The LEGO Movie. Directed by Phil Lord and Christopher Miller. Warner Animation Group, 1 Feb. 2014.

In *The LEGO Movie*, Emmitt Brickowski brings hope to Bricksburg. He sacrifices himself to save his friends, and in the process inspires the whole LEGO world to begin working together to defeat the evil President Business. But while the people Emmitt saved were Master Builders, Emmitt is just a regular guy, or so he thinks. Freddy also embodies these character strengths. First, he thinks he is just a regular guy, but he uses his regular knowledge to help the superheroes in any way he can. Second, Freddy is willing to sacrifice his dignity in order to help the superheroes.

Thor. Directed by Kenneth Branagh. Marvel Studios, 17 Apr. 2011.

Thor shows us a great example of a superhero who is filled with pride. He is the son of the king of Valhala, the mightiest warrior in the realm, and a shoo-in heir to the throne. But when he is banished to Earth, he has to learn humility. Freddy deals with superheroes like this. Blasto is the leader of the superhero guild and one of the strongest members, yet his arrogance leads to the heroes' defeat multiple times until he learns to trust Freddy.

Thor: Love and Thunder. Directed by Tika Waititi. Marvel Studios, 23 Jun. 2022.

In *Love and Thunder*, Thor learns to live with loss. He starts the movie still upset at the broken relationship between him and Dr. Jane Foster. Later on, when he is reunited with her, he learns that she has cancer and is dying. Thor's character shows through in the end and provides a great example for Freddy to follow when it comes to fighting for something instead of against something.

Thor: Ragnarok. Directed by Tika Waititi. Marvel Studios, 10 Oct. 2017.

Thor: Ragnarok shows Thor's descent into depression. His father dies, his home is destroyed, and it seems like all is lost. Freddy deals with depression throughout *Normal Man* as well and Thor's handling of it was a great example for Freddy.