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Dramatic Publishing

SEX LIVES OF SUPERHEROES

by

STEPHEN GREGG



The Dramatic Publishing Company
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(SEX LIVES OF SUPERHEROES)

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SEX LIVES OF SUPERHEROES

**A One Act Comedy
For One Man and Two Women, Extras***

CHARACTERS

MICHAEL]
ELENOR]mid-20s to mid-30s
LISA]
AUDIENCE MEMBER 1
AUDIENCE MEMBER 2
AUDIENCE MEMBER 3

***See Notes at the end of this script.**

TIME: The present.

PLACE: An apartment in New York.

SEX LIVES OF SUPERHEROES was first presented as part of the Manhattan Punchline's Fifth Annual Festival of One Act Comedies on January 13, 1989, with the following cast:

MICHAEL	Barry Miller
ELENOR	Elaine Rinehart
LISA	Andrea Weber
AUDIENCE MEMBER 1	David Konig
AUDIENCE MEMBER 2	Michael Piontek
AUDIENCE MEMBER 3	Andrew Winkler

PRODUCTION CREW

Directed by	Paul Lazarus
Artistic Director	Steve Kaplan
Set Design by	James Wolk
Lighting Design by	Danianne Mizzy
Costume Design by	Fontilla Boone
Sound Design by	Scott David Sanders
Production Manager	Bernita Robinson
Production Stage Manager	Jay McManigal

SEX LIVES OF SUPERHEROES

SCENE: *A spotlight on MICHAEL, speaking to the AUDIENCE. In the surrounding darkness is a studio apartment, unfurnished except for a box full of papers, a bookshelf (with books), a coat rack, a V.C.R., a phone, a desk lamp (on the ground), and a fan. On the wall is a framed poster depicting a comic book superhero, preferably Superman or Daredevil.*

MICHAEL (*authoritatively*). —and so all that this demonstrates is that Iron Man is the exception that proves the rule. In his transformation from millionaire playboy into the human tank known as Iron Man, it is true that Tony Stark plots a different course from most of his peers: he goes from a promiscuous identity to an asexual one. But Iron Man still illustrates the basic fact of comic book sexuality—

(Phone rings once. Lights come up to a normal room setting. MICHAEL looks at phone, which doesn't ring again. After a moment, lights dim. Spot back on MICHAEL.)

MICHAEL. Iron Man still demonstrates the basic fact of comic book sexuality, which is that it's polarized: characters are either asexual or all sexual. Bruce Banner, near-sighted scientist, becomes the raging incarnation

of pure sex, the incredible Hulk. Crippled Dr. Blake becomes Thor, the God of Thunder, mild-mannered reporter becomes Superman. The list goes on. Always the transformation from wallflower to Wonder Woman, from impotence to omnipotence. (*Pause.*) Thank you. (*Sound of the audience applauding.*) We have time for a few questions. (*Pointing to a raised hand.*) Yes?

AUDIENCE MEMBER 1. Based on your concluding remarks, would it be your contention that superheroes without secret identities are more sexually repressed than superheroes with secret identities?

MICHAEL. Excellent question. In general I would have to say yes. Often a hero who doesn't have a secret identity is physically incapable of having one. And frequently the same feature which prevents the hero from disguising himself also prevents him from having sex. Think, for a moment, about the orange, rock-like member of the Fantastic Four known as the Thing. When the Thing was ordinary mortal Ben Grimm he was a football player and somewhat of a stud. But since the fateful day when cosmic rays transformed him into the incredibly powerful Thing, Ben Grimm has been unable to have sex, even with himself. The irony, of course, is that the same cosmic rays which turned Ben Grimm into the Thing, turned the pilot, Reed Richards, into the endlessly stretchable Mr. Fantastic, probably the best lover in the entire Marvel Universe. Somebody else? You ma'am.

LISA (*speaking from the audience. Holding a fishbowl*). You're not such an expert.

MICHAEL. I beg your pardon?

LISA. Let me quiz you.

MICHAEL. We don't have time for this. Somebody else?

LISA. If you're such an expert why don't you see if you can answer this?

MICHAEL. Not now.

LISA. Who was the first comic book character to have sex with a person from another dimension?

MICHAEL. Some other time.

LISA. You don't know the answer. Do you? *(Beat.)* Do you?

(Knock on the door. Instantly, lights change back to normal apartment lighting.)

MICHAEL. Come in.

ELENOR *(off)*. It's locked.

MICHAEL. Hang on. *(Opens door.)* Hi, Elenor?

ELENOR. Yes. You're Michael?

MICHAEL. Yeah. Come in. I'm...I lost track of the time, but I can be ready in a minute.

ELENOR. Take your time.

MICHAEL. It's nice to finally meet you.

ELENOR. You too. I should have called you sooner. Perry kept saying I should call you and I just didn't get around to it.

MICHAEL. Well, I'm glad you did.

ELENOR. I like this apartment.

MICHAEL. Thank you.

ELENOR *(hangs her coat on the rack)*. Did you just move in?

MICHAEL. No. I've been here three years.

ELENOR. Oh. Do you always keep it this...spare?

MICHAEL. No, that's Lisa.

ELENOR. Who's Lisa?

MICHAEL. The love of my life.

ELENOR. Oh, I didn't realize. Perry sort of implied that you were...you know...unattached.

MICHAEL. Oh I am. She hates me.

ELENOR. Oh.

MICHAEL. No, she really does.

ELENOR. I'm sorry.

MICHAEL. That's why I don't have too many things. She's taken them all.

ELENOR. Recently?

MICHAEL. No.

ELENOR. When?

MICHAEL. Well...various times over the last two years.

She moved out two years ago, and a week later she came back and took the dining room table. And since then she's come back once a week, usually on a Wednesday, and taken one object out of the apartment.

ELENOR. It was all hers?

MICHAEL. No, some of it was mine.

ELENOR. Why don't you stop her?

MICHAEL. I don't mind. It makes me feel good to think that she might be made happy by my sacrifice. Besides, it gives me a chance to see her.

ELENOR. But you hardly have anything left.

MICHAEL. I know. In two months she won't have any reason to come back.

ELENOR. Go to *her* house.

MICHAEL. I don't know where she lives. When she moved out she didn't tell me where she was going. The only time I'm allowed to see her is on Wednesdays, when she comes to take something from me.

ELENOR. Why do you put up with that?

MICHAEL. Why? Does it bother you?

ELENOR. No. It doesn't. Never mind.

MICHAEL. Shall we get going?

ELENOR. Sure.

MICHAEL. All right, hang on just a second. (*MICHAEL gets a note pad and paper, and writes a note.*)

ELENOR (*looking at a book on the bookshelf*). Are you a Bronte fan?

MICHAEL. No, Lisa is.

ELENOR. What are you doing?

MICHAEL. Writing Lisa a note.

ELENOR. I thought she came on Wednesdays.

MICHAEL. She usually does. But she didn't come yesterday.

ELENOR. Why not?

MICHAEL. I'm not sure, but my guess is it's the coat rack.

ELENOR. What do you mean?

MICHAEL. She knows I love it. It's an heirloom. And sometimes when she knows I'm especially attached to something, she waits a day or two before she takes it, to prolong my suffering. (*Finishing note.*) Ready?

ELENOR (*reading note*). "Lisa, sorry to have missed you. See you next week." (*Beat.*) You know, I'm not sure this is such a good idea.

MICHAEL. What?

ELENOR. This. Dinner.

MICHAEL. Why not?

ELENOR. It sounds to me like maybe you need to work things out with her.

MICHAEL. No, it's all over.

ELENOR. That's not what it sounds like.

MICHAEL. It is.

ELENOR. I don't think so.

MICHAEL. I can prove it.

ELENOR. How?

MICHAEL. Wait a minute. *(He digs through the box.)*

Here. (He holds up a graph.)

ELENOR. What's this?

MICHAEL. Proof.

ELENOR. It's a graph.

MICHAEL. Do you know anything about math?

ELENOR. Sure.

MICHAEL. Then you know that in mathematics, every line except one that's perfectly vertical has a slope which can be measured. Right?

ELENOR. Yeah.

MICHAEL. After my third date with her, I called Lisa and she said "Oh, I haven't seen you for ages." Ages was three days. So I made this. The x axis represents actual time since Lisa last saw me, measured in hours. The y axis represents perceived time since Lisa last saw me, measured in decades. As her love increases, so does the slope of the line, until every moment seems like an eternity, at which point the line has no slope since her love can't be measured. As the line flattens out, so, unfortunately, does her love, until it's the y axis that's infinite since she never sees me. And the slope goes to zero.

ELENOR. Which is where it is now.

MICHAEL. Exactly.

ELENOR. Does she know about this?

MICHAEL. Yes. That was a mistake.

ELENOR. I bet.

MICHAEL. Because I think she used it to hurt me. Near the end of our time together I went to buy a bottle of milk. I didn't come back for two days. As I walked in

the door she looked up from her reading and said “back already?” throwing me into a fit of mathematical despair. Where do you want to eat?

ELENOR. You know, I think...maybe I should eat alone tonight.

MICHAEL. She doesn't love me.

ELENOR. I believe that. That's what the graph says. But you love her.

MICHAEL. Let's just try it. I promise not to mention her again.

ELENOR. It's not just Lisa.

MICHAEL. What then?

ELENOR. You seem...

MICHAEL. What?

ELENOR. I don't know.

MICHAEL. I seem odd.

ELENOR. A little.

MICHAEL. That's Lisa. I'm obsessed with her, and I admit, it's making me crazy. She interferes with my daydreams.

ELENOR. What are you talking about? What kind of daydreams?

MICHAEL. You know, your basic, ordinary guy daydreams.

ELENOR. Like what?

MICHAEL. Like I'm giving my lecture on the sexual habits of comic book characters at Carnegie Hall.

ELENOR. I need to go.

MICHAEL. And she becomes part of it. She stands up and heckles me, or she asks me a question I can't answer.

ELENOR. Listen, I'm sorry things didn't work out. Maybe Perry knows somebody else you'd like.