

SPIDER-MAN
AND THE
NIGHT OF DOOM

James Shooter

SPIDER-MAN AND THE NIGHT OF DOOM

Introduction

Spider-Man and the Night of Doom is a live show which will play large arenas. It is intended to appeal to everyone who enjoys action and adventure, including the readers of Marvel Comics -- understandable and exciting to very young children, but also entertaining to parents and older viewers.

Most of the stunts and effects, which are enormously important to the success of the show, will be developed later. The choreography of the battles also will be done further along in the development of the production. Because these things are interrelated to each other and to the final set designs, they cannot be fully detailed here. However, indications, descriptions and suggestions are provided.

The arena will be set up with a number of buildings, streets, etc. Each "building" is actually a stage designed to suggest that it is a building such as Peter Parker's apartment, Doctor Strange's house, the Latverian Embassy, and so on. Some of these stages may raise and lower mechanically to facilitate that. Also, below stage passageways and trapdoors for magical disappearances and appearances will be included in some of the stages. A rough sample sketch of Doctor Strange's house and a rough layout of the entire city may be found following this introduction. Note that the largest stage, in the center of the arena serves as a wrestling ring and locker room as well as the Latverian Embassy and Doctor Doom's lab, and will have to be transformed during act one while the lights and action are elsewhere.

There are seventeen live performers in the show playing thirty-seven roles. Time has been allowed for necessary costume changes and movements.

A great deal of emphasis has been placed on story value. Marvel Comics have always succeeded because they do not "talk down" to kids -- therefore, although it is clear and straightforward, the story is one with exciting action, strong characters, powerful drama, and real conflict. The humor -- there is a great deal of humor -- derives from the characters and situations in a natural way. Young children will understand the story and the jokes, without suffering the uncomfortable feeling that they're watching something vaguely embarrassing -- a feeling that kids suffer all too often at children's entertainment events. Older viewers will enjoy the show as well on a different, more sophisticated level -- and, they, also will be spared from embarrassment.

For all ages, for all audiences, Spider-Man and the Night of Doom will be the most exciting, dramatic, spectacular arena show ever.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Introductory Video

ACT I

Overture

Scene 1: The Wrestling Ring and the Locker Room

Laserclaw, Sister Scrap Iron, Referee, Peter Parker/
Spider-Man, the Thing, Doctor Doom, Armadillo,
Zaphammer, Steel Squid, the Ring Announcer, Iron Man,
Wolverine, Power Man, Iron Fist

Scene 2: The City, and Peter Parker and Mary Jane's Apartment

Spider-Man, Mary Jane
Video appearance: Aunt May

Scene 3: The Latverian Embassy and Doom's Lab

Zaphammer, Armadillo, Steel Squid, La Maestra,
Doctor Doom, Spider-Man, Leviathan,
Video appearance: Doom's Mother, Dormammu,
Scratcher, Biter, Laff, the Servant, Zaphammer,
Armadillo, Steel Squid.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

PAGE 2

Scene 4: The City

Spider-Man, Mary Jane

Scene 5 Doctor Strange's Sanctum

Spider-Man, Doctor Strange, Niff the Imp

Scene 6: Doom's Lab

Doctor Doom, Audience Plant #1, Audience Plant #2,
Audience Plant #3, Ultron, Slug, Flea, Tsetse
Video appearance: Wolverine, Iron Man, Storm
Voice only: The Computer

Scene 7: The City

Spider-Man, Doctor Strange, Niff the Imp, La Maestra,
Armadillo, Zaphammer, Steel Squid

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

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ACT II

Entre' Acte

Scene 1: A Street Corner

Armadillo, Zaphammer, Steel Squid, Iron Man,
Storm, Wolverine

Scene 2: Doctor Strange's Sanctum

Doctor Strange, Niff the Imp, Mary Jane,
Power Man, Iron Fist, the Hulk
Video appearance: Iron Man, Wolverine,
Storm, Three Mysterious Figures (Slug,
Flea, Tsetse), Power Man, Iron Fist

Scene 3: Doom's Lab, Outside the Latverian Embassy

Doctor Doom, Doctor Strange, Niff the Imp,
Power Man, Iron Fist, the Hulk, Slug, Flea,
Tsetse, Bruce Banner, Audience Plant #4/Pulsar,
Ultron, Spider-Man, La Maestra, Scratcher,
Biter, Laff, Dormammu, Wolverine, Storm,
Iron Man.
Video appearance: Scratcher, Biter, Laff,
Doom's Mother, Dormammu
Voice only: The Computer

Scene 4: The City and Doom's Lab

La Maestra, Spider-Man, Mary Jane, Doom

Finale

Live Cast

1. Peter Parker/Spider-Man
2. Doctor Doom
3. Mary Jane
4. Iron Fist/Niff the Imp
5. Doctor Strange
6. Leviathan/Hulk
7. Sister Scrap Iron/Maestra
8. Laserclaw/Storm
9. Armadillo/Power Man
10. Steel Squid/Iron Fist
11. Thing/Iron Man
12. Wolverine/Ultron/Wolverine
13. Zaphammer/Plant in Audience/Pulsar
14. Power Man/Plant in Audience/Slug/Dormammu
15. Iron Man/Plant in Audience/Tsetse/Scratcher*
16. Ring Announcer/Bruce Banner/Biter
17. Referee/Plant in Audience/Flea/Laff

*This may be a female actor.

Screen Only

1. Aunt May
2. Doom's Mother
3. Doom's Servant
4. Wrestling Announcer
5. Wrestling "Color Man"

Voice Only

1. The Computer

SPIDER-MAN
AND THE
NIGHT OF DOOM

FIFTEEN MINUTES BEFORE THE SHOW

The house lights are up and the lights over the performance area are off, leaving the "city" therein cloaked in shadows.

Suddenly, dramatic music with a rapid, driving beat fills the arena. The overhead screens light up. A series of Marvel Comics covers are displayed on the screens. The covers used will be the best and most exciting we can find that feature or include characters used in the show. They'll flash on the screen one at a time, in time with the music. Occasionally we'll pull in closer...closer! Closer! on a cover before moving on to the next one. The effect will be similar to the old Time Magazine commercial in which a series of news photos were flashed onto the TV screen in time with a rapid beat and a voice "...fascinating, scintillating, (etc.)...Time.

This continues, repeating as necessary...

Spider-Man flips down off the web line and addresses the camera right side up. He gestures toward the city behind him.

SPIDER-MAN

I live here, in the city. It's an exciting place.

A loud roar of jets comes up suddenly and passes, and as it does, a shadow zips across Spider-Man, who ducks instinctively. A rush of wind immediately follows. It should seem that a small jet plane just flew by a few feet over Spider-Man's head. Spider-Man quickly regains his composure and addresses us again.

SPIDER-MAN

Sometimes it's more exciting than I like!
Did you see that? That was Iron Man!

Cut to Iron Man flying. (Note: This and all other scenes that Spider-Man envisions, i.e. all scenes in which Spider-Man does a voice over, will be done as sequences of comic book drawings. That is, as full-screen, full color comics style illustrations with no word balloons or captions. Only the Spider-Man sequences are live action). This should be an up shot, so the background is just sky. Spider-Man continues speaking as a voice-over.

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

Boy, is he in a hurry! Maybe there's a
big sale on Rust-o-leum at K-Mart! Or
maybe he's got a hot date with an Oldsmobile.

Back to Spider-Man, who is now sticking to a vertical wall, perhaps the elevator machinery housing, in a typical, spidery pose. As he speaks, he leaps from the wall, tumbles and balances on one hand on the building ledge. He does this casually, nonchalantly, the way you or I would twiddle our thumbs or cross our legs. His voice remains even, unstrained throughout. He's just clowning around a little...and maybe showing off a bit.

SPIDER-MAN

Just kidding. Iron Man and me are good
friends, really. Ol' shell head and I
have battled side by side against bad guys
lots of times.

Spider-Man sits, reasonably normally on the building ledge, and for a rare moment looks serious.

SPIDER-MAN

Funny, I really don't know too much about him. I mean, I know what he can do...

Cut to Iron Man, on the ground, smashing through a brick wall. Smoke billows out from the hole and tongues of flame lick the edges. This place is on fire. Again, Spider-Man does voice-over.

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SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

I know that electronic, circuitized armor of his makes him stronger than a bulldozer...

We see that this is a shop or factory of some sort. Iron Man strides through the blazing inferno. Burning debris falling on him bounces off harmlessly, even fairly large timbers, etc. He hears cries for help.

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

Almost nothing can hurt him...

A loft area with heavy equipment starts to collapse on a worker trapped in the building. Iron Man raises his hands, pointing the repulsor ray units housed in the palms of his gauntlets at the debris. We cut to a close-up of his gauntlets and these units as he does this. The units fire their

repulsor rays, and we pull back to see the mass of falling debris blown harmlessly back away from the worker.

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

And those repulsor rays of his--!
Wow!

Iron Man leads the coughing, choking, frightened worker to safety, looking very heroic, and we cut back to Spider-Man, who is swinging on his web. He releases the web, flips through the air, and lands on the side of a building near a window.

SPIDER-MAN

Yep. He's something. But, like I was saying, I don't know too much about the man inside that armor...But, that's okay. Naturally, I can understand a guy wanting to keep his privacy. I'll tell you this much about him. He's a real hero. They don't come any better.

Spider-Man looks out over the city.

SPIDER-MAN

You meet a lot of good people in this biz...

Cut to Storm and Wolverine, walking warily, quietly through some rough wooded areas. Storm looks majestic, Wolverine skulks almost animal-like.

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

Not too long ago, I ran into a couple of the X-Men...Storm and Wolverine. Now, they're something--!

Reaching a clearing, Storm gestures imperiously at the sky. Winds rise, lightning flashes, thunder rolls.

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

Storm actually controls weather! She's a good lady to know if you're planning a picnic.

Storm flies into the air, and off screen, borne aloft by the winds she creates. As she does so, Wolverine enters the frame, watching Storm go. He's buffeted a little by the fierce winds.

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

I've seen her ride stormwinds as if they were stallions!

Wolverine continues on foot, moving stealthily, almost tiger-like. He stops and sniffs the air. He smells prey. A little further on, he comes to a ravine. He stops and looks around. A large, dead tree is nearby.

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

Wolverine's a strange guy. He seems like
he's half animal, the way he moves and acts.

Close up of Wolverine's hand and forearm as he pops his claws out.

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

He's even got these indestructible, razor-
sharp bionic claws built right into his
arm Yeesh!

Wolverine fells the dead tree we saw before with one swipe of his claws. It falls across the
ravine, making a bridge. Retracting his claws, Wolverine lopes across.

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SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

Most of the time he seems like a nice
enough guy...

On the other side of the ravine, Wolverine stops, sniffs, and looks warily around. Suddenly there
is a crashing of brush, and Wolverine does a quarter turn to face...something. All we see is an
enormous, robotlike shadow fall across Wolverine. It is in fact, a Sentinel, but we won't show it.
Wolverine's look is fierce as he sees his foe. He pops his claws and starts toward his enemy with
blood in his eye. His berserker fury is rising with each step.

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

But sometimes he just sort of...loses it.
He gets, I don't know...maniacal.

Close up of Wolverine's face, maybe seen through his claws. It is the face of a raging berserker. He's snarling.

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

It's better to have him on your side...

Back to Spider-Man, still perched pretty much as before. In this shot though, perhaps as we pull in toward Spider-Man, we get a glimpse in through the window Spider-Man's near, and see a rotund fellow in an undershirt and sweatpants watching TV.

SPIDER-MAN

Another guy I know has a bit of a temper,
too...

Cut to a New York street. Three obvious criminals with satchels of money are fleeing Power Man and Iron Fist. The thugs are armed, two with handguns and one with an Uzi. They are firing at their pursuers, trying to make it to their getaway car, a big sedan. Iron Fist ducks, dodges and darts Ninja-like, evading their shots. Power Man isn't cautious at all. He's just charging right at them. We feature Power Man here.

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

The guy's name is Power Man. He's a real smart, savvy, street-wise kind of guy. He knows the underside of the city better than anybody.

Iron Fist reaches the two pistol-bearers, evading their shots in his martial arts style at point blank range. He disarms them with quick Kung Fu moves. They try to fight him hand to hand. One grabs an old broomstick from a trash can and swings it. Iron Fist easily evades their blows.

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

His partner called Iron Fist. Sort of...
Chuck Norris times ten.

Meanwhile, as Power Man passes a fruit stand in pursuit of the Uzi guy, the Uzi guy turns and fires a burst. The bullets chop up some fruit, some of which splatters Power Man's shirt. Power Man is furious. He brushes pulp and juice from his shirt, shakes the stuff off his fingers, and stalks toward the Uzi guy. He's utterly cautionless now. The Uzi guy looks scared. He fires again and again at Power Man, but the bullets bounce off.

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

Might as well throw jellybeans at Power Man instead of shooting at him. Bullets bounce off. He says it's because he has "steel hard skin". I say it's because a bullet wouldn't dare hurt him!

The Uzi guy throws down his gun as Power Man nears him, and in complete panic dives into the car. Power Man stalks angrily toward the car. Cut to Iron Fist, who in a spectacular move flips around behind his two foes and puts them both to sleep with a Mister Spock-type nerve pinch. As they fall a loud crunch causes him to turn. His mouth falls open and he looks utterly amazed at what he sees. We cut to what he sees, which is Power Man crunching up the car around the former Uzi guy, making it an escape-proof temporary jail (and scaring the crook near to death).

Power Man flips the wreck upside down as a last touch. The crook is probably scared straight forever.

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

Did I mention how strong he is?

Cut back to Spider-Man, still perched on the wall, though in a different pose -- maybe upside down. Again, we get a glimpse of the rotund fellow inside the window near Spider-Man. The rotund fellow is looking toward the window, puzzled. He could swear he hears a voice out there. He shrugs and returns to watching TV.

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SPIDER-MAN

Power Man and Iron Fist are the only two super-heroes I know who are listed in the Yellow Pages under "Heroes for Hire". They do it for a living -- you know, sort of like private detectives. Seems a little weird to me...

Spider-Man pretends to answer a phone.

SPIDER-MAN

Hello? Rescue your kitten from a tree?
Sure, that'll be fifteen bucks...

Spider-Man shrugs.

SPIDER-MAN

Weird. But, hey, the weirdest guy I know is Doctor Strange. He lives in this really strange -- I mean unusual house downtown...

Cut to Doctor Strange's Sanctum. Doctor Strange is in the midst of a conjuration. There are candles all around, a small, steaming cauldron, and various magical artifacts, including a large, ancient book on a bookstand. Strange is making magical passes over the cauldron. At a gesture from Strange, a vial of some mystic powder levitates and empties itself into the cauldron. Then he gestures at the book and the page turns itself. He studies the new page.

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

Doc is a sorcerer. The Sorcerer Supreme, he says. I believe him.

With a dusting-hands gesture that tells us he's finished with his brew, Strange gets himself a mug -- something very real-world, like a Snoopy mug -- and pours himself a drink. He's obviously made some kind of mystic hot chocolate. He settles into a Laz-E-Boy recliner (which sticks out like a sore thumb amid the Victorian clutter of his Sanctum) opens up an issue of Sports Illustrated, and, with a gesture, turns on the stereo (which is across the room) and relaxes, listening to the Beach Boys.

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

I don't know what he does there all day...probably meditates, or practices card tricks, or something...

Something causes Strange to tense, as if he's heard something no one else can hear. We pull back to include the Orb of Agamotto in the shot. It silently slides open. Quickly Strange snaps off the music, rises, and approaches the Orb. Obviously concerned, he studies it. A large, black, spreading blotch can be seen.

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

He says he guards our dimension from mystic threats. He's got a mystic thingie -- the "Orb of Agamotto" or something -- that warns him when there's trouble. It's like a magic radar. It picks up bad guy magicians, Ancient curses...super-bogey men. I guess. I don't know. I don't even like to think about it. Brrr!

Strange levitates into a lotus position in mid-air, entering a trance. His astral form emerges, floats in the air above Strange's body gathering itself for a moment, then zips out right through the wall. The Orb, with its splotch, is still visible. So, too, should be the Sanctum's distinctive window. Note: Strange's astral form is a barely visible, ghostly image of Strange. We should make the astral form's amulet glow, a pinpoint of light, to justify our use of a spotlight for Strange's astral form in the live part of the show.

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

When something comes up, he usually doesn't even have to leave the house... physically, that is. He just releases his Astral Form -- sort of a ghostly "inner self". It can go anywhere. So if there's sorcerous trouble in Borneo, Belgium, or on the next block...

Same shot as before. A brilliant flash outside sends light streaming into the Sanctum through its distinctive window. Eerie, multicolored, flickering lights follow. Then there is another flash and an eerie shrieking, ending with a thunderclap. The splotch on the Orb fades as all grows quiet again. Doctor Strange's astral form returns to his body as the Orb, now clear, closes. Strange reanimates his body, dusts his hands again in the "it's finished" gesture, and heads back to his chair.

Cut to Spider-Man again, on the wall. By now, the rotund fellow is sure he's hearing voices. He pokes his head out the window and looks around, but not up. Spider-Man is above him. Spider-Man watches this amusedly. Puzzled, the rotund man goes back to his TV watching. Spider-Man begins to speak to us again.

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SPIDER-MAN

Yeah, Doc Strange is really str--uh, weird. Hmm. Who else do I know who's interesting? (He thinks for a few seconds) Well, for sheer power...

Cut to the Southwest, where the Hulk is smashing a huge villainous-looking Super Tank which is trying to capture him. The Tank has mechanical arms, which are grappling with the Hulk. The Hulk rips the arms off!

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

...you can't beat the Hulk!

The Hulk is blasted by the Tank's rockets, lasers, and flame throwers, but shrugs it all off. Then he rips the huge, heavily armored Tank to bits, spectacularly.

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

A lot of people call him a monster.
They're not wrong. He...doesn't work
and play well with others, if you know
what I mean.

The Hulk roars and rages as the Tank operators bail out of the wreck and go hotfooting it across the desert, away from the Hulk.

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

He's hostile, all right...and always angry.
But I've never seen him do anything out-
and-out evil, or start any trouble. He
never throws the first punch...but he always
throws the last.

Hulk plods dully along through a rocky area. He looks confused, and a little tired. He sits on a rock, holding his hand to his head as if he were trying to think, but it hurts.

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

The big problem is that he isn't exactly
Einstein. A lot of times he just blunders
into trouble 'cause he's not very bright.

Hulk leans back on the rock, tired, confused but growing calm -- and therefore begins to change, becoming Bruce Banner.

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

It's hard to believe the Hulk is really Doctor Bruce Banner, the famous atomic scientist. Banner's a very peaceful, gentle person. But he was affected by the Gamma Rays he was experimenting with, and now whenever he's under stress, he Hulk's out!

Banner pulls himself together, gets his bearings, and heads off across the desert, presumably toward a town.

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

Hard to believe that little skinny guy is the most dangerous creature in the world when he gets mad. For sure, Hulk's the strongest guy on Earth.

Cut back to Spider-Man. We see the rotund man running around his room looking under cushions and behind pictures for the source of the voice. He thinks he may be going nuts.

SPIDER-MAN

Hmm. I know one guy who might argue that point...

Cut to the Thing in Fantastic Four headquarters, working out on a huge, super exercise machine.

SPIDER-MAN (V.O.)

...the Thing. He's one of the famous Fantastic Four. He's real strong. And real ugly...in a cuddly sort of way.

Back to Spider-Man, close up, asking us to keep a confidence.

SPIDER-MAN

Uh, don't tell him I said that, about him being ugly, okay? We're friends, and I wouldn't want to hurt his feelings...or get my head broken.

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Suddenly, the TV in the rotund fellow's apartment, which has been barely audible up till now, is blaring. A news show is on, which we, and Spider-Man, can suddenly hear. Spider-Man does a take at the sudden intrusion, and looks into the room. He sees the rotund fellow sitting very close to the TV, which is turned all the way up, with his hands over his ears. On the TV we can see a Newscaster. Behind him is an image of Doctor Doom.

TV NEWSCASTER

...this just in. Doctor Victor Von Doom, absolute monarch of the tiny-but-powerful European country called Latveria, arrived in the city today.

SPIDER-MAN

Doctor Doom's in town? Man, that guy's nothing but trouble!

The camera pulls in to focus on the TV.

TV NEWSCASTER

He wears a bizarre iron mask. He is immeasurably wealthy. He is reputed to be a scientific genius, and yet a dabbler in the occult. He describes himself as a man of peace, and yet he has openly declared his intention to conquer the world.

The image behind the Newscaster changes to the Latverian Embassy.

TV NEWSCASTER

Doctor Doom, as he is known, will be staying at the Latverian Embassy in midtown. He would make no comment on his purpose here, except that it is not a diplomatic mission. His reasons for visiting our city, like the man himself, remain a mystery.

The image behind the Newscaster fades.

TV NEWSCASTER

We'll be back after this...

The camera pulls back so we can see Spider-Man looking through the window. As he pulls his head back, and therefore is not visible to the rotund fellow, the rotund fellow, still holding his ears, turns and looks at the window. Seeing nothing he turns back to the TV. On the TV comes a commercial for the championship wrestling show at the arena tonight. The Unlimited Class Wrestling logo (to be designed) and pictures of the wrestlers flash onto the TV screen as an announcer's voice pitches.

TV ANNOUNCER

Tonight! At the (insert name of arena)!
World Championship Unlimited Class Wrestling!
Be there as the Jersey Devil battles Iceberg
Ike!

Spider-Man, hearing the beginning of the commercial, pops his head back down so he can see in the window, just as the rotund fellow turns. Again we pull in close up on the TV.

TV ANNOUNCER

Thrill as Sister Scrap Iron takes on
Laserclaw in their long-awaited grudge
match! And don't miss the spectacular
three-man free for all for the championship
of the world! The Armadillo! Steel Squid!
Zaphammer! They fight for it all! This is
the big one!

Cut to our outside shot, and again, Spider-Man pops his head back out of sight just as the rotund man turns to look.

SPIDER-MAN

That sounds terrific! I think maybe I'll check that out.

Closer on Spider-Man.

SPIDER-MAN

Well, it's getting late. The wrestling show'll be starting soon. I'd better be going.

He starts to scamper up the wall, then stops.

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SPIDER-MAN

Hmm. I suppose I really ought to tell you something about me, huh?

Closer still, as Spider-Man confides in us.

SPIDER-MAN

Well, the reason I want to go to the wrestling show is so I can take some action photos at ringside. If I get some good shots I can sell 'em to the Daily Bugle, a big newspaper. That's how I make my living. In my civilian identity, I'm a photographer.

We pull back somewhat and Spider-Man starts to leave again. Then stops again.

SPIDER-MAN

Oh...what the hey. I guess I can tell you...

Very close on Spider-Man. He slowly removes his mask, revealing to us his face.

SPIDER-MAN

I'm really Peter Parker -- part-time college student, part-time photographer... and full-time husband of the most gorgeous girl in the world. I really wish you could meet Mary Jane. Oh, well, maybe later.

Again as he starts to leave, pulling his mask on.

SPIDER-MAN

Look, I've got to go. Please, don't tell anybody who I really am, okay?

Spider-Man takes one last look in the window at the rotund man, who is standing at the window, hands still over his ears, TV still blaring looking out. They are almost eyeball to eyeball for a second. The rotund man freezes, wide-eyed. Spider-Man looks back at us.

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SPIDER-MAN

I take it back. Doctor Strange is not
the weirdest guy I know.

Spider-Man leaps off the wall and web-slings away. The rotund man is still frozen, wide-eyed.
Music rises.

SPIDER-MAN

Man, what a city. Sheesh.

The screens go dark. There is a momentary hush.

Then the overture begins.

ACT I

The house lights dim as the overture begins. On the screens overhead we see action-oriented vignettes of Spider-Man, Doctor Doom, Doctor Strange and the other characters in the show. These vignettes will be taken from actual scenes in the first act, but will be carefully contrived not to give anything away. Only tantalizing glimpses of the new characters will be shown.

SCENE I

As the overture ends, the Unlimited Class Wrestling Federation logo appears on the screen, and the lights come up over the wrestling ring. The ring is a special, super-heavy duty affair. A match between two women, Sister Scrap Iron and Laserclaw is in progress. There is also a Referee in the ring.

Laserclaw, a black woman, has a huge claw device over her lefthand and a laser blaster on her right forearm. Sister Scrap Iron, a hispanic woman, is armored. Both wear headgear that disguises their faces

The action is super-spectacular. These are Unlimited Class Wrestlers, who have super powers and are allowed some weapons, so in addition to "normal" exhibition wrestling moves, they battle in superhuman fashion. Sister Scrap Iron's armor and great strength make her a virtual juggernaut. Laserclaw is relatively more agile and uses her claw and laser to rip and whittle away at Sister Scrap Iron's armor.

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As the lights go up over the ring and we "join the match in progress," Laserclaw is firing a fusilade of laser blasts at Sister Scrap Iron. Many of the blasts hit her, sending showers of sparks flying. Those that miss her hit ring posts, the ring floor, and a ring rope. Each hit causes a small explosion. One rope is severed (at the post) by a blast. Sister Scrap Iron is driven back by this fusilade, augmented, perhaps, by a flying kick or two. Laserclaw follows up by locking her claw around Sister Scrap Iron's arm and twisting. During most of this, the Referee is mainly trying to save his own skin, ducking and covering. An unseen Announcer calls the fight blow-by-blow.

ANNOUNCER

...and Laserclaw has come back strong!
Boy, some amazing things happen in
Unlimited Class Wrestling -- where
the rules are few and the thrills
are many! Sister Scrap Iron is in
bi-ig brouble, Bruno!

A Color Commentator, obviously an ex-wrestler, a not-too-bright, brutish-sounding guy, chips in his observation as Laserclaw continues her painful arm-twisting.

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COLOR COMMENTATOR

Well, Al, it was really just a matter of time. I mean, if you look at the stats...

On the big screen, a fact file on Laserclaw appears. It is somewhat like a simplified Marvel Universe Hnadbook entry, with a dynamic picture of Laserclaw and the following information:

UCWF FACT FILE

Name: LASERCLAW
Height: 5'11"
Weight: 150 LBS
Ring Weight (in costume): 210 LBS.
Strength Level: CAN LIFT 4600 LBS.
Speed/Agility Rating: 5.5
Weapons: MECHANICAL CLAW
MINI LASER CANNON

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COLOR COMMENTATOR

...Laserclaw's advantage is overwhelming. Maybe she ain't as strong as Sister Scrap Iron -- she can only lift forty-six hunnert pounds -- but she's got the armament -- that mechanical claw an' that devastatin' laser cannon--!

In the ring, Sister Scrap Iron bellows and shrieks as she writhers in Laserclaw's vicious, vise-like hold. Laserclaw just puts the pressure on more.

COLOR COMMENTATOR

Her biggest edge, though, is that five-point-five speed and agility rating. She's much faster than Sister Scrap Iron. Speed kills, Al. I'll take speed over strength every time!

While the above is going on, Peter Parker makes his way down an aisle of the arena, into the performance area, and near the ring. He begins snapping photos.

5

Suddenly, with a supreme effort, Sister Scrap Iron spins out of Laserclaw's grip and hurls Laserclaw across the ring. Laserclaw bounces off the ropes and barrels into Sister Scrap Iron, who stands firm, an immovable object. Laserclaw is stunned by the impact, and staggers around woozily. Sister Scrap Iron takes the offensive, grabbing Laserclaw in a mighty bear hug against the ropes. Laserclaw shrieks and flails helplessly.

ANNOUNCER

Incredible! Sister Scrap Iron has taken charge!

A huge man in slouch hat, scarf, heavy overcoat and shades is sitting in the audience. Underneath this disguise he is the Thing, As Sister Scrap Iron takes command, he rises and enters the arena. A spotlight picks him up.

As the Thing slowly makes his way toward the ring, meanwhile, in the ring, the Referee is trying to get Sister Scrap Iron to turn Laserclaw loose. After all, she is partly over the ropes.

Laserclaw, still flailing, fires a few useless laser blasts, almost on reflex. They hit here and there around the ring.

6

Sister Scrap Iron, tired of the Referee annoying her, shoves him away. He almost flies across the ring, landing roughly in a corner. As he pulls himself together, a random laser blast accidentally hits him right in the seat of the pants! There is a small explosion, and the Referee yelps. He runs around fanning his smoldering fanny, finally running out of the ring and dousing his tail in a water bucket near one of the corners. He stays there, soaking, much relieved.

ANNOUNCER

Oh, my goodness! Sister Scrap Iron
is going to town on Laserclaw, and
now there's no one to stop it!
Bruno, this turn around is
unbelievable!

COLOR COMMENTATOR

It had to happen, Al.

Sister Scrap Iron's fact file appears on the screens:

7

UCWF FACT FILE

Name: SISTER SCRAP IRON
Height: 5'11"
Weight: 140 LBS.
Ring Weight (in costume): 1006 LBS.
Strength Level: CAN LIFT 10,000 LBS.
Speed/Agility Rating: 2.6
Weapons: BLUDGEON GAUNTLETS

COLOR COMMENTATOR

Maybe Sister Scrap Iron's a bit slow
-- she's only got a two-point-six
speed and agility rating -- but she's
one heck of a lot stronger! Slow and
steady wins the race, Al. Give me
strength over quickness any day!

Sister Scrap Iron goes for a coup de grace, a hammer-like double-fisted punch, but Laserclaw, somehow, with a supreme effort, manages to roll away from Sister Scrap Iron's blow and get off an immense laser blast. It catches Sister Scrap Iron flush. There is a big explosion, and Sister Scrap Iron's armor begins smoking and smoldering all over. She wobbles and flails around.

8

Meanwhile, Sister Scrap Iron's fact file is replaced on the screen by the Unlimited Class Wrestling Federation logo.

ANNOUNCER

Amazing! Laserclaw has blasted Sister
Scrap Iron into a smoldering junk heap!
Bruno, how do you explain this?

COLOR COMMENTATOR

I dunno, Al. I think it's all
dumb luck.

Laserclaw, on her feet again, starts exulting in her apparent victory. By this time the Referee has recovered and climbed back into the ring. He starts counting out the staggering, smoking Sister Scrap Iron -- but in her blind thrashing, Sister Scrap Iron accidentally stumbles into Laserclaw from behind, knocking her to the canvas. Then Sister Scrap Iron falls on top of Laserclaw, accidentally pinning her. The Referee quickly counts out Laserclaw and declares Sister Scrap Iron the winner.

ANNOUNCER

And the winner is...Sister Scrap
Iron! Sister Scrap Iron! How about
that, Bruno?

COLOR COMMENTATOR

Well, Al, this bout was a masterpiece
of strategy on Sister Scrap Iron's
part -- which only proves again that
brains are what wins matches in
Unlimited Class Wrestling!

(Note: All of the above should happen very quickly, in little more time than it takes to say the dialogue. It is very important that this scene moves rapidly.)

By this time the Thing has reached ringside. The lights dim a bit in the ring and focus on Peter Parker and the Thing. Peter Parker notices the Thing, recognizing him despite the disguise, and starts taking pictures of him. The Thing growls and shoves Pete aside. He doesn't want pictures.

PETE

Hey! You're the Thing! Mind if I
take some...

THING

(Growling) Yeah, I mind, twerp.

Meanwhile, in the ring, Laserclaw leaves muttering and shaking her fists, Sister Scrap Iron, still smoking a bit, limps out in triumph, and the Referee works on repairing the severed rope. The UCWF logo remains on the screen. Music rises, a wrestler's theme.

The lights dim a bit on Peter Parker, who busies himself reloading. Spots follow the Thing to the locker room where the lights now rise. Inside we see the Armadillo, Zaphammer, and Steel Squid, preparing for their bout. Zaphammer is using a huge generator to charge up his belt-pod batteries which are connected by a thick cable to the electrified sledgehammer he wields. (Note: There is a big, long, thick bright yellow extension cord hanging near the generator.) Steel Squid is practicing with his retractable steel grappling cables on a practice dummy. Armadillo, a gentler soul, is polishing his scales with a big brush.

The Thing finds the locker room door locked. It is big, heavy-duty and reinforced, like everything to do with Unlimited Class Wrestling. The Thing calmly takes off his disguise, neatly folding his coat, etc., and casually-but-spectacularly smashes the door to splinters.

11

The wrestlers look up, but are not too surprised. This is the UCWF, after all. The Armadillo, a "good guy" wrestler, just as the Thing was in his old wrestling days, is glad to see the Thing. The other two wrestlers, bad guys with many an old score to settle are not happy to see the Thing.

ARMADILLO

Hey, fellers! Lookie who's here!
It's the Thing!

ZAPHAMMER

Oh, is it? I'd assumed it was
merely an extremely ugly pile of
rocks.

STEEL SQUID

This is pro wrestler's locker room,
Thing. Not a rest home for has beens.

THING

I ain't a has been. I retired. AS
champ. An' if you two don't shut up
yer traps, I'll do what I did to ya
at Wrestlexpo in Pittsburgh

12

Angered by what is obviously a painful memory, Zaphammer and Steel Squid lunge at the Thing. The Thing, anticipating their attack, has already started to reach for a huge 20,000 lb. barbell which is on a super-duty weight rack. In a fluid motion he hefts it and tosses it at the two charging wrestlers. They catch it, but it sends them reeling back. They tumble backwards, slamming into a row of lockers, and end up on the floor, trying to wriggle out from under the weight. The Thing glowers at them.

THING

I didn't come here for violence.

The Thing turns to Armadillo, and looks a lot friendlier. He extends his hand, which Armadillo enthusiastically shakes.

THING

I just wanted to wish my ol' pal,
the Armadillo good luck!

ARMADILLO

Gee, thanks, Thing. But aren't you
gonna wish Zaphammer (he points to
Zaphammer) and Steel Squid (again he
points) good luck, too?

13

THING

Nah. They don't need luck. They

cheat. Especially Zaphammer.

By this time Zaphammer and Steel Squid are on their feet again, angry, but wary of the Thing's awesome strength. They glare hatefully at the Thing -- and Armadillo -- but don't attack. The Thing keeps one eye on the two bad guys as he and Armadillo continue talking. Armadillo is as excited as a kid at Christmas.

ARMADILLO

Did you hear about the prize?
Whoever wins the match gets a
million dollars!

THING

No kiddin'?

ARMADILLO

I just gotta win that money. After
I win it, I'm gonna retire! I'm
gonna open a chili parlor back in
Houston!

14

Armadillo grows wistful and seems desperate.

ARMADILLO

I just can't take bein' in the ring
anymore. I'm tired of rasslin'...I
-- I even get scared sometimes! Some
of these fellers -- they aren't nice.
They play for keeps, y'know?

Armadillo gets very intense, very desperate. The Thing is a little worried by this.

ARMADILLO

I gotta win. I gotta have the money.
I'd do anything to get that money and
get out of the ring..!

THING

Hey, Armie, take it easy. Money
ain't that important.

ARMADILLO

You don't understand--!

15

THING

Sure I do. It ain't worth losin' yer
self respect over. So lighten up,
willya?

The Thing starts to leave, but pauses to issue a warning to Zaphammer and Steel Squid.

THING

There better not be any cheatin'
out there. Got that? I'll be
watchin'.

ZAPHAMMER

Us? Cheat? What an absurd notion
--right Steel Squid?

STEEL SQUID

Hug? You mean we aren't gonna...

Zaphammer muffles Steel Squid.

ZAPHAMMER

Quiet! You nincompoop!

16

The Thing glowers at the two bad guys, then turns toward Armadillo. The Thing is friendly, almost fatherly here.

THING

My daddy used to say a man could
always sell himself. But mo matter
what price he got, it'd turn out to
be not enuff. Don't do nothin'
stupid, kid, okay? An' good luck
out there. Again.

The Thing walks out and positions himself near the ring. Peter Parker is still there, but gives the Thing a wide berth. The lights rise on the ring and dim on the locker room. The Referee, who has finished repairing the rope is in the ring. The UCWF logo is still on the screen. A Ring Announcer enters the ring, and a microphone is lowered down to him. A fight bell clangs several times to get the crowd's attention (as if it were necessary) and he speaks.

17

RING ANNOUNCER

Good evening ladies and gentlemen,
and welcome to the magnificent (name
of arena) in beautiful (city, state).
I am Doug McKinney, and on behalf of

the Unlimited Class Wrestling Federation, I am pleased to introduce the combatants in tonight's featured event.

Armadillo, Zaphammer, and Steel Squid climb into the ring.

RING ANNOUNCER

But, first, I'd like to introduce several honored celebrities who are here with us tonight. Here, at ring-side, ladies and gentlemen, is the strong man of the world-famous group of heroes known as the Fantastic Four, the former UCWF world champion, the Thing! Thing!

Many spotlights focus on the Thing, who angrily waves them away. He hates attention. On the big screen comes his fact file:

18

UCWF FACT FILE

Name: THE THING

Height: 6'0"

Weight: 500 LBS.

Strength Level: CAN LIFT 40,000 LBS.

Speed/Agility Rating: 7.6

Weapons: NONE

The Thing's fact file remains on the screen for ten seconds, then is replaced by the UCWF logo as the Ring Announcer continues.

RING ANNOUNCER

Also present tonight, in the audience, that world famous champion of justice, the Armored Avenger himself...Iron Man! Iron Man!

Spotlights focus on Iron Man seated among the crowd. He stands and waves.

RING ANNOUNCER

And, from the somewhat mysterious term known as the X-Men, the man called Wolverine! Wolverine!

19

Spotlights find Wolverine in the crowd. He stands and gives a perfunctory wave. He also isn't fond of attention.

RING ANNOUNCER

And, now two Heroes for Hire, whose brave exploits are well known in this city, and whose rates are very reasonable, Power Man...

Spotlights find Power Man in the crowd. He stands and waves, a bit embarrassed.

RING ANNOUNCER

...and his partner, Iron Fist. Power Man and Iron Fist!

Spotlights focus on Iron Man, who's right next to Power Man. The spots remain on Power Man while they're on Iron Fist, and after Iron Fist takes a martial arts style bow, he and Power Man high five and clasp hands.

RING ANNOUNCER

Heroes all! Let's have a big round
of applause for them.

20

There is applause.

RING ANNOUNCER

The proceeds of our wrestling program
tonight will be donated to the Search
for Missing Children Fund. (Note:
This is a made-up charity. A real one
of similar intent could be inserted.)
In addition, an extremely generous
gentleman has donated an additional
ten million dollars to that worthy
cause. He is here in the audience
tonight...

The spotlights find a figure in the audience, who, like the Thing, is thoroughly disguised under a hat, shades, a scarf, and a coat. His "disguise" is much classier-looking than the Thing's however.

RING ANNOUNCER

...and even though he prefers to
remain anonymous, let's give him a
big round of applause!

21

The disguised figure rises majestically and basks in the adulation, as if it were his due. The spotlights leave him as the applause fades, and he sits again.

RING ANNOUNCER

Our mysterious benefactor says that he "...has great sympathy for those missing a loved one." Apparently, he also likes winners, ladies and gentlemen, because he has offered a prize of one million dollars to the winner of our main event! And now, allow me to introduce the combatants! First, the number three-ranked contender for the vacant world heavyweight championship title...

The Armadillo's fact file appears on the screens:

UCWF FACT FILE

Name: ARMADILLO

Height: 6'7"

Weight: 540 LBS.

Strength Level: CAN LIFT 20,000 LBS.

Speed/Agility Rating: 1.9

Weapons: NONE

22

RING ANNOUNCER

...he stands six-feet-seven inches tall, he weights in at five hundred forty pounds, with a one-point-nine speed and agility rating. He can lift twenty thousand pounds--! Ladies and gentlemen, the armor-plated Texan, Armadillo! Armadillo!

Armadillo plods out of his corner and waves to the crowd, very polite, very sincere and ingenuous.

RING ANNOUNCER

Now, the number two contender...

Steel Squid's fact file appears on the screens:

UCWF FACT FILE

Name: STEEL SQUID

Height: 6'0"

Weight: 210 LBS.

Ring Weight (in costume): 300 LBS.

Strength Level: CAN LIFT 8,000 LBS.

Speed/Agility Rating: 7.2

Weapons: TEMPERED STEEL CONSTRICTING TENTACLES

23

RING ANNOUNCER

He's six feet tall, fights at three hundred pounds, with a seven-point-two speed and agility rating. He can lift eight thousand pounds, and his sanctioned weapons are two tempered steel constricting tentacles. He's the metal-monster from the deeps of Detroit, Steel Squid! Steel Squid!

Steel Squid trots out of his corner, giving Armadillo a cheap shot en route, and raises his clasped hands over his head, bouncing slightly, at center ring. He looks mean.

RING ANNOUNCER

And now, the number one ranked
contender for the championship of
the world...

Zaphammer's fact file appears on the screens:

24

UCWF FACT FILE

Name: ZAPHAMMER

Height: 6'4"

Weight: 250 LBS.

Ring Weight (in costume, with weapon): 440 LBS.

Strength Level: CAN LIFT 11,000 LBS.

Speed/Agility Rating: 7.8

Weapons: ONE 100 LB., 50,000 VOLT ELECTRO-
SHOCK SLEDGEHAMMER

RING ANNOUNCER

He's six-foot-four, his fighting
weight is four hundred forty pounds,
he has a speed and agility rating of
seven-point-eight. He can lift eleven
thousand pounds! He is armed with an
UCWF-sanctioned electrified sledge-
hammer. He's the East Coast
electrocutioner, the Pulverizer from
Princeton, New Jersey...Zaphammer!
Zaphammer!

25

Zaphammer strides arrogantly to the center of the ring, swinging his hammer. He takes a cheap-shot swipe at Armadillo, who, made wary by Steel Squid's cheap shot, narrowly avoids being hit. It looks like it's a good thing he did, because the hammer hits the floor near him, making a

thunderous crack and a shower of sparks. Zaphammer returns to his corner as the Ring Announcer continues. The UCWF logo returns to the screens.

RING ANNOUNCER

This bout will be a no-time-limit,
King-of-the-Hill match. The last man
left standing in the ring is the winner!

While the Ring Announcer is talking, Zaphammer is surreptitiously arranging something in his corner. It appears to be a thick cable of some sort, but he's being careful to keep it hidden.

RING ANNOUNCER

And so, without further ado, let the
match begin!

The Ring Announcer leaves the ring, the bell rings, and the Referee signals the fighters out of their corners.

26

Zaphammer charges Armadillo and swings wildly. Armadillo manages somehow to duck, and Zaphammer ends up off balance, crashing into a ring post, his hammer crackling and sparking when it makes contact with the floor. Steel Squid leaps on Armadillo's back, trying to wrap him in his cables, but Armadillo hurls him away. He bounces off the ropes and slams into the brick-wall like Armadillo on the rebound. Steel Squid's stunned and staggers woozily. Zaphammer moves toward Armadillo again, more warily this time, occasionally slamming his hammer to the floor, causing a thunderous crack and a shower of sparks. It's reminiscent of a lion tamer cracking his whip. Armadillo flinches a little with each crack. Meanwhile, Steel Squid who has recovered, is maneuvering around behind Armadillo.

ANNOUNCER

Ver-ry interesting. First Zaphammer
launches a blitzkrieg assault against
Armadillo, then Steel Squid tries a

sneak attack...now Armadillo is being stalked by both of them. Do you suppose they've formed some kind of unholy alliance, Bruno?

27

COLOR COMMENTATOR

Nah. No way, Al. First of all, it'd be a violation of the rules. Zappy the Squid are just too savvy to risk disqualification in such an important match.

Zaphammer lunges, swinging at Armadillo, who catches the hammer by the handle!

ANNOUNCER

Look at that! And they say Armadillo is slow--!

Zaphammer tries to pull the hammer away with both hands, but Armadillo's great strength thwarts him. Zaphammer's in trouble. Armadillo raises his free hand to clobber Zaphammer. Steel Squid, hoping to wrap Armadillo up while he's occupied with Zaphammer leaps at Armadillo, but he ducks and backhands Steel Squid with his free hand. Steel Squid again goes flying.

ANNOUNCER

The Armadillo is fighting an inspired fight!

28

COLOR COMMENTATOR

Yep. He's got it in the bag, Al.

Armadillo rears back again to clobber Zaphammer, but Steel Squid charges again, ducks Armadillo's backhand, and wraps his coils around Armadillo's throat from behind. Armadillo releases Zaphammer and claws at the cables. Zaphammer hauls off and finally lands a thunderous hammer blow on Armadillo. He staggered. Zaphammer and Steel Squid pour it on. Armadillo struggles valiantly, trying to fight back, but he's being overwhelmed.

ANNOUNCER

Just a minute, here--! Zaphammer and Steel Squid are ignoring each other entirely and ganging up on the Armadillo!

29

COLOR COMMENTATOR

Obviously, Al, they've formed an illegal alliance. They're really bending the everyman-for-himself-rule, here. As I said they're extremely savvy fighters, so they'll try every dirty, illegal trick in the book if they think they can get away with it.

The pummeling goes on. It's looking worse and worse for the Armadillo. The Thing is looking ever angrier and ever more restless at ringside. Peter Parker is still taking pictures, but he, too, looks distressed. In the stands, Iron Man is concerned, Wolverine, who expects dirty play is calm but interested, Power Man is totally relaxed. He thinks it's fake. And Iron Fist almost can't stand to watch. He hates violence. (Note: Only the people close around the heroes in the audience will see their reactions, but it is important that they remain in character.) Finally, Armadillo goes down! And still Zaphammer and Steel Squid won't let up.

ANNOUNCER

He's down! But Zaphammer and Steel Squid aren't finished yet. The Thing is beside himself at ringside--! It's well known that he and the Armadillo are good friends. Bruno, is this their way of getting back at the Thing for that night in Pittsburgh?

COLOR COMMENTATOR

I think they're just getting a little carried away in the heat of battle, that's all.

The Referee, who has been almost totally ineffective so far, tries to stop the abuse being inflicted on the Armadillo, but Zaphammer chases him out of the ring! He hides, outside the ring, nearby.

Steel Squid, his cables tightly wrapped, one around Armadillo's arms and one around Armadillo's neck, yanks the near-unconscious Armadillo's head up off the canvas, setting him up for a vicious head shot from Zaphammer.

STEEL SQUID

Watch close, Thing! This is for what'cha did to us in Pittsburgh!

Zaphammer rears back with his hammer. Peter Parker is poised to vault into the ring -- secret identity be hanged -- to save Armadillo. In the audience, Iron Man is halfway out of his seat, ready to zoom to the rescue, Wolverine is concerned -- this is too much even for him -- Iron Fist

is on his feet in the aisle ready to rush in, and even Power Man is worried that what's about to happen in the ring isn't fake. (Note: Again, only the people close around the heroes in the audience will notice their reactions.) The Thing beats them all to it though. He vaults into the ring and barrels into Zaphammer, knocking him for a loop and making his coup de grace miss by inches.

THING

That does it! It's Clobberin' time!

The Thing goes after Steel Squid, who releases the dazed Armadillo so he can defend himself. It does him no good. With a few spectacular wrestling slams and kicks, the Thing batters Steel Squid into helplessness.

32

ANNOUNCER

The Thing has entered the ring--!
And he is angry! Look at that!
What a shot! Steel Squid is out
on his feet!

The Thing starts to tie the dazed Steel Squid to a ring post with his own cables. Zaphammer though, has recovered and attacks the Thing again from behind. Though the Thing anticipates his charge and tries to protect himself, Zaphammer gets in a good hammer-slam. Sparks fly. The Thing is rocked a bit. Zaphammer hammers him again, and again the Thing is rocked slightly.

ANNOUNCER

Oh, a devastating blow--! And
another one!

COLOR COMMENTATOR

Well, the Thing blew his chance!
He's in for it now!

Zaphammer rears back and swings again, but the Thing blocks the blow and counters with a thunderous backhand. Zaphammer flies across the ring, bounces off the ropes and hurtles back at the Thing...who deftly steps aside and lets Zaphammer crash hard into Steel Squid. They're both stunned. The Thing angrily bellow at them.

THING

I know what you two sleazeballs wuz up to--! After ya trashed Armie, one o'you wuz gonna take a dive and let the other win--an'then later split the million. Right? Dirtbags.

The Thing goes over to aid the still-down Armadillo.

ARMADILLO

See? See...what I mean? I gotta win...gotta get that money...

THING

After you get on yer feet, Armie, we're gonna start this match again --but this time I'm gonna do the refereein'.

ANNOUNCER

This is very irregular! The Thing seems to be taking charge of this match!

As the Thing tends to Armadillo, who sits up, finally recovering, Zaphammer crawls toward his corner.

COLOR COMMENTATOR

Good! From this point on, we'll see a good, clean, fair fight!

Zaphammer, in his corner, pulls out the long, thick yellow extension cord we saw him planting there before (the same one we saw in the locker room). He plugs it into this belt pod and a spotlight illuminates the generator in the locker room. We hear the whining sound of the generator starting up, and we can see it going. Zaphammer's hammer glows with power. Steel Squid is beginning to recover, too.

ANNOUNCER

What? What's this? Zaphammer seems to be plugging into an auxilliary power source! He can't do that!

35

COLOR COMMENTATOR

Geez, his hammer's really supercharged now...

Zaphammer sneaks toward the Thing who's still trying to help Armadillo up. He doesn't see Zaphammer sneaking toward him. Peter Parker sees him though...

PETER PARKER

Thing! Behind you!

THING

Huh?

Zaphammer gives the Thing a supercharged shot from behind. It makes an enormous crack and electric flash. The Thing is staggered. He reels. Peter Parker realizes the Thing's in trouble. Zaphammer thunderously hammers the Thing again. Pete's seen enough. He races into the dimly lit locker room and begins to strip off his outer clothes.

36

ANNOUNCER

This is an outrage! A flagrant violation of the rules--!

The Thing fights back valiantly. For a moment it looks as though he'll turn things around, but Steel Squid, now recovered, joins in. The two bad guys start to overwhelm the Thing. The Armadillo is still struggling, trying to get to his feet.

ANNOUNCER

Now they're ganging up on the Thing!
What's wrong with those men? Don't they have any integrity? Any sense of honor?

COLOR COMMENTATOR

Well, Al, everybody has their price.
Offhand, I'd say Zappy an' the Squid go for about a million.

Zaphammer's about to give the dazed Thing the coup de grace -- but Armadillo, still dizzy himself lunges at Zaphammer, preventing it. Steel Squid pulls Armadillo off of Zaphammer and uses his tentacles to whirl Armadillo into a ring post, stunning him again. The Thing is still on the ropes, and Zaphammer winds up again.

COLOR COMMENTATOR

Well, Al, you gotta hand it to Steel Squid and especially to Zaphammer -- they're resourceful guys who know how to win!

ANNOUNCER

Oh, shut up, Bruno! Why doesn't somebody stop this atrocity?

In the audience, all four heroes are about to race to the rescue -- but before they can, Spider-Man vaults acrobatically into the ring, and in one fluid motion sweeps the legs out from under Zaphammer, dropping him on his backside.

ANNOUNCER

Spider-Man! Spider-Man has appeared from out of nowhere and entered the ring!

Spider-Man takes a bow to the audience as Steel Squid warily circles him and Zaphammer clambers to his feet. The Thing and Armadillo are virtually out cold.

COLOR COMMENTATOR

Yeah, but what's a little guy like
him going to do against Zaphammer
and the Squid? Get creamed?

Zaphammer and Steel Squid charge! Using speed and fantastic agility, Spider-Man easily outmaneuvers the bad guys -- he trips, flips and spins them, and smashes them into each other.

ANNOUNCER

Don't be so sure. He's very fast...
he'd probably have a speed and agility
rating of fifteen

39

COLOR COMMENTATOR

But the scale only goes to ten!

Spider-Man evades an attack from behind without even looking.

ANNOUNCER

Exactly! And I've heard he's got
some special instinct -- Spider-
Sense -- which warns him of danger.
It's like having eyes in the back of
your head!

Realizing he's going to lose, Zaphammer runs over to the still-woozy Thing and threatens to belt him with the hammer!

ZAPHAMMER

Freeze, Spider-Man! Or I'll brain
him.

Spider-Man freezes. Steel Squid pulls himself together and wraps his coils around Spider-Man's torso, pinning his arms. Zaphammer drops the Thing and saunters toward Spider-Man, grinning.

40

COLOR COMMENTATOR

He's done for now!

ANNOUNCER

I'm not sure. I've heard that he's
a lot stronger than he looks.

Spider-Man strains at the coils.

ANNOUNCER

He has the proportionate strength
of a Spider! I saw him pick up a
bus once!

Spider-Man strains. Zaphammer winds up for a deadly blow.

ANNOUNCER

Come on, Spider-Man--!

26

With a mighty effort, Spider-Man bursts Steel Squid's coils into shreds! Zaphammer pauses a second in disbelief. Steel Squid, too is frozen in shock. The Zaphammer swings anyway -- but

Spider-Man is way too quick for him. He dives out of the way, and Zaphammer kayo's Steel Squid instead!

ANNOUNCER

He did it!

COLOR COMMENTATOR

But those coils were tempered steel!

No one could...

Spider-Man shoots a web up to the ceiling, swings himself in an arc and slams a double kick into Zaphammer's body, putting him out for the count!

ANNOUNCER

That's it! Spider-Man knocks out
Zaphammer with a web-swinging double
kick!

Spider-Man stands in the center of the ring, surveying the fallen warriors all around. The Referee clambers back into the ring, walks over and raises Spider-Man's hand in the traditional victory gesture.

ANNOUNCER

And the winner is Spider-Man! Spider-
Man has been declared the winner.

The other combatants struggle to their feet. The Thing congratulates Spider-Man. The others, including the Armadillo are cursing and fuming.

27

RING ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen, the winner of
our main event, and new champion of
the world, the webslinging wonder,
the arachnid adventurer, the Amazing
Sp...

ZAPHAMMER

Just one second, my dear fellow...!
He can't win! He isn't even on the
card!

STEEL SQUID

Yeah. We should win. Me an' Zappy.

THING

Ah, shuddup you jerks! Spider-Man
beat ya fair and square!

ARMADILLO

But--but he isn't even a rassler!
He--he can't win. Please--!

A Darth Vader-like voice suddenly reverberates through the arena, freezing everybody. Spots illuminate the Mysterious Benefactor who's donating the prize. He's standing and gesturing imperiously.

MYSTERIOUS BENEFACTOR

Enough! Spider-Man is the winner.
Give him the prize. Now.

The Mysterious Benefactor turns to leave and the lights illuminating him go out.

28

The Ring Announcer gives Spider-Man the envelope and the belt. Spider-Man tears the envelope and looks inside. Steel Squid tries to sneak a peek over his shoulder. Irritated, Spider-Man closes the envelope and bounds acrobatically out of the ring. The Referee and Ring Announcer also depart the ring and exit the performance area, and the UCWF logo fades from the big screens, which go blank.

SPIDER-MAN

See you around guys! It was a
pleasure doing business with you!

Spider-Man runs off to the locker room, picks up his clothes, and exits the performance area.

The Thing says good-bye to Armadillo, who looks very down in the dumps.

THING

Don't sweat losin' the money too much, Armie. You just work hard, keep yer nose clean, and things'll work out for ya. Remember what I tol'ja in the locker room, okay? Take care.

ARMADILLO

Sure.

The Thing growls at Zaphammer and Steel Squid, who also look dejected.

THING

You two are a disgrace to yer profession. I ought to stick around and teach you a lesson--but me an' the rest of the Fantastic Four are headin' to the Moon tonight to visit our old buddies, the Inhumans.

29

Don't worry, though, you got a rain-check. Next time I see ya...look out!

The Thing clambers out of the ring. Zaphammer and Steel Squid regard him balefully. As the Thing exits through the audience, Zaphammer, Steel Squid, and Armadillo climb out of the ring. All lights go out except a single spot lighting the three of them, near the locker room. Armadillo is miserable, Zaphammer and Steel Squid are miserable and angry.

ZAPHAMMER

What a disgusting turn of events!

STEEL SQUID

We were robbed!

ARMADILLO

Now I'll never get to open my chili parlor.

ZAPHAMMER

I say we track down Spider-Man and take the money from him! It should have been ours!

STEEL SQUID

He doesn't have the money yet! All he got was the address of the place where he can pick it up! But I saw it!

ZAPHAMMER

You did?! Splendid! We'll go there and lay a trap for him! We'll be rich yet.

STEEL SQUID

He's pretty tough...

30

ZAPHAMMER

The three of us could subdue him. How about it, Armadillo? Are you with us?

Armadillo is shocked at the thought of foul play. he shakes his head no and backs away as though he'd been offered a live tarantula sandwich.

STEEL SQUID

C'mon, Armie. A third of a million's still a lot of moola! You need the dough, right? All you gotta do is give us a hand. One little no-no for all that money.

ARMADILLO

But...well...but...

STEEL SQUID

Come on!

ARMADILLO

Well...I guess....okay.

ZAPHAMMER

Excellent! Let's go!

They start to walk away, the light goes out, and they exit the arena.

31

SCENE 2

A second after the spot on the wrestlers goes out, spotlights illuminate Spider-Man, who is on some high perch on one side of the arena. He holds the envelope, even kisses it. He also has a web-knapsack on his back with his civvies inside. He's deliriously happy, doing flips (or whatever acrobatics it's safe to do there.)

SPIDER-MAN

Wa-hooooo! (sings) We're in the
money! We're in the money! We've
got a lot of what it takes to get
along!

(Speaking) I can't wait to tell Mary Jane!

The lights rise in the city--streelights, lights inside buildings, signs, etc. Also, the lights rise halfway on Peter Parker's apartment.

Mary Jane enters the living room of Peter Parker's apartment from another room, the bedroom, which is downstairs and underneath the living room. The audience is not privy to, the bedroom. She flips on the lights, and the room is fully lit by local lights and spots. She's in a robe, brushing her hair. All around the living room are fancy designer boutique boxes, obviously having

been bought on an earlier shopping spree. She puts her brush down and she turns on the stereo. As the hot, rock music starts, Mary Jane dances around the room singing (this is her theme). She occasionally stops dancing (but never quite stops) as she opens the boxes and pulls out the wild, hip, sexy clothes she bought, holding them up in front of her, admiring them in the mirror, etc. Suddenly the phone rings. Mary Jane stops the music, starts toward the phone and stops. She looks frustrated, and a little peeved. She talks to the still-ringing phone. She speaks between rings. She says "Good-bye, May!" right after the last ring.

32

MARY JANE

Hello? May Parker! What a surprise./Just like it was five minutes ago. And five minutes before that./And every five minutes for the last two hours./No, your darling nephew, my darling husband Peter isn't home yet./Yes, I'll be sure to tell him to call you./Good-bye, May!

Mary Jane turns the music on again. Meanwhile, Spider-Man has made his way to a high point not too far from his apartment. He shoots a web and swings across the city, alighting on his "roof". He enters through his "skylight" (these have to be designed not to interfere with the audience's view). Mary Jane looks thrilled to see him. He pulls the envelope from before out of his web bag (where, presumably, the championship belt, and his clothes are) as he enters.

SPIDER-MAN

Anybody here need a Super-Hero?

MARY JANE

Yes! Rescue me from your Aunt May!
She's driving me crazy!

Leaping to the floor, Spider-Man pulls off his mask. He and Mary Jane kiss.

SPIDER-MAN

I have a surprise, MJ!

MARY JANE

So do I! Wait'll you see me in it,
Tiger! Growr!

33

SPIDER-MAN

(Noticing the new clothes) More
new clothes?

MARY JANE

(With mock guilt and anger) All
right! So I spend every penny I make
as a model on the clothes I'm
modelling. So what? (wistfully)
Someday, I'll be a world-famous
actress! My name will be in lights--!
(emoting, hamming it up) "Mary Jane
Watson--Superstar!" I'll make so
much money, we'll actually have a
bank account!

SPIDER-MAN

We don't have to wait, MJ! I've got
some big news!

Suddenly the phone rings. Mary Jane makes a "Lord give me strength" gesture. Spider-Man is eager to tell Mary Jane his news and has a "why now?" look.

MARY JANE

It's Aunt May again! She's early!
It's only been three minutes since
the last call!

SPIDER-MAN

Didn't you tell her I'd call her

when I got in?

Spider-Man goes to answer the phone.

MARY JANE

Every time! Next time, I'm going to tell her you can't come to the phone...

34

Spider-Man picks up the handset and is about to say hello...

MARY JANE

...because you're out saving the world as Spider-Man.

Spider-Man hangs up! He looks panicked!

SPIDER-MAN

Oh, no! What if she heard that?!

Mary Jane is peeved enough not to regret her faux pas too much. The phone rings again. Mary Jane ceremoniously zips her lips and Spider-Man answers. As he does, we see Aunt May on the screen, in her Forest Hills home.

SPIDER-MAN

Hello?

AUNT MAY

Peter? I must've dialed the wrong number a minute ago. I heard someone talking to Spider-Man...then I was cut off.

SPIDER-MAN

Really? Imagine that.

AUNT MAY

Who'd have thought a horrible person

like Spider-Man would have a telephone!

SPIDER-MAN

Uh-huh. Listen, I can't talk now,
Aunt May...

35

AUNT MAY

I'm so glad you turned out to be such
a nice boy, Peter. If you had grown
up to be a--a weirdo who ran around
in an awful mask--! I'd just die!

SPIDER-MAN

You raised me right, Aunt May.
Listen, I've got to go now... I'll
call you tomorrow, okay?

AUNT MAY

In the morning?

SPIDER-MAN

Okay.

AUNT MAY

Early? Promise?

SPIDER-MAN

Sure, if you promise not to party
all night at the disco!

AUNT MAY

Peter Parker, you're such a caution!
And such a nice young man. I love
you. Say good-night to Mary Jane
for me.

SPIDER-MAN

Good-night, Aunt May.

All through this conversation, Mary Jane has been expressing her boredom in various ways -- Playing with Spider-Man's hair, holding new clothes up in front of herself in front of the mirror and especially, trying to get a look at the envelope Spider-Man holds, since she correctly guesses that it has to do with Spider-Man's surprise. He won't let her peek. Finally, Spider-Man hangs up and Aunt May disappears from the screens.

36

MARY JANE

I love Aunt May, but not as much as the phone company does.

SPIDER-MAN

Look, MJ, she was like a mother to me. If she and Uncle Ben hadn't taken me in, I would have grown up in an orphanage!

MARY JANE

I know. I love her, too, Peter, but she's really a bit much sometimes.

SPIDER-MAN

Well...let's not talk about Aunt May. Let's talk about the million bucks I won tonight!

MARY JANE

What?

SPIDER-MAN

I won a million dollars at the wrestling show tonight! It was almost an accident--I'll explain it all later! The important thing is that we're rich!

MARY JANE

That's...wonderful!

SPIDER-MAN

We can pay off my college tuition...
and send you to acting school--! And
we'll do, I don't know...something
really nice for Aunt May...

37

MARY JANE

Yes! Send her on vacation to Tierra
del Fuego for a month!

SPIDER-MAN

What? She wouldn't want that...

MARY JANE

Then we'll go. Someplace, anyplace
where there are no phones.

SPIDER-MAN

Oh, come on--! She's just a little
lonely. She doesn't mean to be a
pain. She needs me.

MARY JANE

Think of it Peter--! No calls from
Aunt May for a month! Would that be
heaven, or what?

SPIDER-MAN

Well...

MARY JANE

I'll call the travel agent first

thing tomorrow. Look, Peter, you're always saving the world and helping other people -- how about doing one little thing for yourself. For us.

SPIDER-MAN

Isn't that being...selfish?

MARY JANE

Maybe...a little. But, Peter this may be our only chance to have a little happiness and peace for a long time! I mean, you'll never make this kind of money selling photos to the Daily Bugle. Come on, Peter...

38

SPIDER-MAN

Well. I guess...okay.

MARY JANE

Great!

SPIDER-MAN

I'll tell Aunt May tomorrow. Oops! (noticing the time, 11:30) I'd better get going. It's time to go collect the million dollars.

MARY JANE

This late?

Spider-Man pulls his mask on again and climbs up the wall toward the skylight.

SPIDER-MAN

That's what the instructions on the prize certificate say! Seeya, MJ.

The lights fade on Peter Parker's apartment, and the arena goes to blackness for a second, and Spider-Man and Mary Jane exit the performance area under the cover of darkness.

39

SCENE 3

The wrestling ring/locker set has been transformed into Latverian Embassy set during the last scene. Preferably, this should happen quickly, at the beginning of the previous scene, while all eyes are on Spider-Man up in the rafters. It would also be good if this could be accomplished in some mechanical, automated fashion, without stage hands visible. The lights rise halfway on the lab and Embassy, and also in the city in general. A spotlight picks up Zaphammer, Armadillo, and Steel Squid lurking outside the doorway of the Latverian Embassy (which should have a sign saying "Latverian Embassy"). The wrestlers are, in stage whispers, discussing their plans.

STEEL SQUID

This is the place. The instructions on the prize certificate said Spider-Man should show up at a quarter to midnight.

ZAPHAMMER

All right...we'll hide here, near the main entrance. We'll let Spider-Man enter peacefully enough...but we'll spring out and ambush him as he's leaving! Understand?

ARMADILLO

Do we have to hurt him?

STEEL SQUID

Armie, think about how bad you want the money.

ARMADILLO

Yeah..?

STEEL SQUID

Spider-Man wants it, too. So we're going to have to beat him to a pulp and pry it out of his hands. But, then, Armie...you'll be rich! And you'll be serving up chili in "The Armadillo's Eatery" in no time.

ARMADILLO

No! It's "Chili ala Armadilly"!

STEEL SQUID

So...you gonna help us smash that bug man?

ARMADILLO

I'll do it.

ZAPHAMMER

Enough talk!

As the wrestlers duck into hiding places, the lights on them go out. They exit the performance area. Meanwhile, the lights rise in the laboratory. The Mysterious Benefactor from before enters from outside the performance area into the lab. He strides across the lab and stops.

MYSTERIOUS BENEFACTOR

Maestra! Come to me!

There is a burst of flame and smoke, and La Maestra de las Sombras appears about ten feet away from the Mysterious Benefactor's side. (Note: The word "Maestra" is the feminine form of the Spanish word for "Master." Though it translates as "Mistress" it does not have any of the negative connotations of the English word "Mistress.") Maestra is Hispanic-looking, beautiful, and clearly a sorceress. She's young--in her early twenties--and very lively, spirited and vivacious. Her hair and costume are a little punky. She is a stark contrast to the brooding Mysterious Benefactor.

The Mysterious Benefactor isn't surprised at all by Maestra's appearance, and doesn't even look at her. He is a regal, imperious figure. She bows slightly as she acknowledges him.

MAESTRA

You want me, you got me! (Noticing the disguise) Hey, why the disguise?

The Mysterious Benefactor still looks lost in his brooding. He begins to pull off his hat, coat, scarf, and glasses.

MYSTERIOUS BENEFACTOR

Because ordinary men would tremble and flee in terror...

The coat, etc. come off and the Mysterious Benefactor is revealed as Doctor Doom. Doom turns dramatically, as if surveying the lab (so the whole audience can see him).

DOCTOR DOOM

...at the sight of Doctor Doom.

Maestra levitates Doctor Doom's coat, etc. away. They come to rest on an ornate chair. There is a sound effect as she does this.

MAESTRA

I don't blame them. You're a scary guy.

Doom, surprised by her candor, as he apparently often is, finally seems to really pay attention to Maestra.

DOCTOR DOOM

And do you, La Maestra de las Sombras--the Shadow Sorceress--fear me?

MAESTRA

Sometimes.

DOCTOR DOOM

Good.

Doom strides toward a control panel and checks some gauges, and adjusts some dials.

DOCTOR DOOM

Have you acquired the artifacts we
shall need tonight?

Maestra gestures and, in a puff of smoke, a large, intricately carved candlestick and candle (unlit) appear, floating in mid air.

MAESTRA

This is the last--and most important
one.

Maestra levitates the candlestick across the room and allows it to settle gently on the floor.

DOCTOR DOOM

You have done well, Maestra.

Doom turns toward Maestra, and for the first time, his tone softens.

DOCTOR DOOM

What I shall attempt tonight is
dangerous. I need your help no
longer. For your own safety, you
must leave here. Now.

Maestra, fusses with the candlestick, carefully positioning it.

MAESTRA

Nope. No way. Not a chance.

Doom gets grimmer.

DOCTOR DOOM

Begone, woman! Doom has spoken!

Maestra gets serious, faces Doom.

MAESTRA

Nope. I owe you, Doom, remember?
You saved my life when you rescued
me from those witch-hunters a month
ago.

DOCTOR DOOM

Your debt is paid!

Maestra approaches Doom and bravely faces him.

MAESTRA

Maybe you think so...but I don't.
Besides, what you're going to
attempt tonight endangers the entire
world. No place is safe. Besides...

Maestra speaks like someone discussing a thing of profound historical significance, looking at Doom with obvious admiration.

MAESTRA

...if you actually succeed in ripping
open a doorway into the Dark Dimension
of the Dread Dormammu, then I want to
be here!

Doom regards her with new respect, but isn't convinced.

DOCTOR DOOM

Why?

Maestra turns away from Doom, musing as she idly picks up and examines various things around the lab--a strangely-shaped flask, a skull, a weird electronic gadget, whatever.

MAESTRA

Why? Hm. You haven't told me why you want to breach Dormammu's realm. What could you be seeking in such a vile, dangerous place?

Maestra ponders aloud.

MAESTRA

Are you looking for wealth? No. You're already rich. You could pay off the national debt with your pocket change.

Are you hoping to find knowledge? You? The smartest man in the world? The scientific genius? Nah.

Can it be power? But you're already the absolute ruler of Latveria...and the most dangerous man alive. It's only a matter of time until you conquer the world. You don't need more power. Not that bad.

Doom is deep in thought, pondering whether or not to tell Maestra the truth. She continues her questioning, pressingly.

MAESTRA

I'm tempted to think that you want to rip a hole into Dormammu's home simply because it's a challenge. Only the impossible is a challenge for you. And only you, among all men, would dare to try such a thing.

But...no...there's more to this than proving your macho...isn't there?

DOCTOR DOOM

Yes...

Doom takes a largish, oddly-shaped crystal from a felt-lined box. He places it on a table and it begins to spin.

DOCTOR DOOM

This is a memory crystal. It can absorb memories and play them back for others to see. Watch...feel...

The overhead screens light up with scenes from Doom's memories. First we see a beautiful woman, Doom's Mother, engaged in mixing potions. She is dressed as a gypsy. A boy, also in gypsy clothes is spying on her unseen by her. This is young Victor Von Doom.

DOCTOR DOOM

My mother was a sorceress...much like you, Maestra. Often I would spy on her while she performed magical rites.

Doom's Mother conjures up a vision of the Dread Dormammu. We get only a hint of him here-- clear enough so we'll recognize him later, but not enough to lessen the impact of his arrival. Young Victor still watches.

DOCTOR DOOM

When I was very young, I saw her make
a pact with the Dread Dormammu in
order to gain greater powers.

Cut to a time years later. Doom's Mother is in a different place than before, perhaps a long hallway. She is running, fleeing, from what we don't know. She comes to a dead end--a wall. There is nowhere else to run. An eerie swirling mist hangs in the air near her.

DOCTOR DOOM

Years later, her debt came due.

A huge claw or tentacle reaches out of the mist and drags Doom's Mother in, kicking and screaming. Victor, much older in this part, sees this.

DOCTOR DOOM

She was swept into the Dark Dimension
where she has been enslaved by Dormammu
ever since.

The crystal stops spinning. The screen goes blank. Maestra reacts to the story.

MAESTRA

That's horrible! When did this
happen?

DOCTOR DOOM

Tonight is the thirteenth anniversary
of my mother's enslavement. And
tonight...at last...I intend to free
her.

MAESTRA

(Aghast) But...no one's ever gotten
out of the Dark Dimension! Dormammu's
power is...

Doom slams an armored fist down, smashing a weird, sculpted bust. He's angry.

DOCTOR DOOM

I am aware of Dormammu's power! Once before, I attempted to make contact with my mother. I wear this accursed mask to hide the scars!

He turns toward Maestra, almost threateningly.

DOCTOR DOOM

But I fear Dormammu not.

MAESTRA

(Dramatically) Let me see the scars.

DOCTOR DOOM

Doom needs no pity, woman.

Maestra stands right before him and looks deep into his eyes.

MAESTRA

I don't pity you. Let me see your face.

Slowly, Doom reaches up and begins to unlock his mask.

DOCTOR DOOM

Very well. Can your young eyes endure the sight? We shall see...

Spotlights overhead and behind Doom light Doom and Maestra. The lights dim or go out in the rest of the lab. The effect is to light Doom in high contrast with his face mostly in shadow. He pulls the mask away. Maestra does not flinch.

DOCTOR DOOM

There! Behold. And cringe in horror.

MAESTRA

I don't see anything horrifying. I
see the face of a brave, strong,
tormented man.

Maestra kisses Doom. Time stands still for a moment, for them. Doom, then, gently pushes her away and returns to the security of his mask as the lights in the lab rise again.

DOCTOR DOOM

The time is almost nigh. We must
prepare.

MAESTRA

But...even if we can breach the Dark
Dimension--how can we win your mother's
freedom?

Suddenly there is a knock on the window and Spider-Man crawls in. He looks excited.

SPIDER-MAN

(Singing) We're in the money! We're
in the money! We've got a lot...
(Speaking) Hi,folks! It's only me,
here to rake in a million--

Spider-Man sees Doom and stops short.

SPIDER-MAN

Oops.

Spider-Man turns to go back toward, and out the window.

SPIDER-MAN

I must have the wrong address! (Stage

whisper) Who'd have though a horrible person like Doctor Doom would have an address?

DOCTOR DOOM
Stand fast!

Maestra, with a mystic gesture (accompanied by the "levitating" sound effect) causes large, strong, steel-bar shutters to slam closed, sealing the window.

SPIDER-MAN
Uh-oh...

DOCTOR DOOM
You will receive your prize, Spider-Man. But, first you must perform a small service for me. Did you not read the extremely fine print on the wrestling posters?

SPIDER-MAN
(Warily) What sort of "service"?

DOCTOR DOOM
A simple task for the greatest wrestling champion of all. You must wrestle the Dread Dormammu, Master of the Dark Dimension, in order to free my mother from his clutches.

Spider-Man starts toward the window again.

SPIDER-MAN
Sorry.

50

DOCTOR DOOM
Wait! I'll pay two million! Ten

million!

Spider-Man tugs on the steel bars.

SPIDER-MAN

Nope. I don't do interdimensional wrestling. Or drugs, or other suicidal stuff.

Spider-Man rips the steel bar shutters open.

SPIDER-MAN

I do windows. And right now, I'm doing this one.

Spider-Man is halfway out the window. Doom is beside himself. It was, of course, unimaginable to him that a "low-level intellect" like Spider-Man couldn't be tempted by wealth. He's desperate.

DOCTOR DOOM

Spider-Man--! Please!

Spider-Man stops short. Saying "please" is probably the hardest thing Doom's ever done.

DOCTOR DOOM

My mother...has suffered in the demon's pits...for thirteen years...

Spider-Man hangs his head. He knows what he has to do.

SPIDER-MAN

Is it, uh...dangerous?

DOCTOR DOOM

To lose is certain death.

Spider-Man looks pained.

SPIDER-MAN

How did I know you were going to say that. I think I'm tele-pathetic.

Spider-Man steps back into the room.

SPIDER-MAN

I guess I'll do it.

DOCTOR DOOM

Excellent! Maestra, we must prepare quickly.

Maestra, with a flame from her finger, lights the candle. Doom frantically adjusts controls and throws switches. Spider-Man steels himself. Music rises. As Doom pulls a large lever, the lights in the lab flicker and surge, and all city lights go to black.

SPIDER-MAN

What was that?

DOCTOR DOOM

I have drained the city's electrical grid and channelled the energy to power my machines.

SPIDER-MAN

You caused a black out? But...

DOCTOR DOOM

That is not your concern. These may be your last moments on Earth. Prepare yourself to fight. And possibly...to die.

Doom is busy with his controls. Maestra makes mystic signs (accompanied by light effects) over the candle. Spider-Man steels himself. His theme music rises.

MAESTRA

Doom! It is midnight!

DOCTOR DOOM

All is in readiness! Now!

Doom pulls a big switch, and finally, with spectacular effect, the dimensional portal is wrenched open. The portal is a smoky opening in the floor which is linked by lasers, lights or in some other way to the overhead screens, on which we see visuals. Now, on them we see a hellish realm. Then, dramatically, demons, bat-like monsters, and frightening creatures surge toward the screens, seemingly hammering on them as if trying to break through. Suddenly, though, they part, and Dormammu sweeps toward the screens until his face fills them. Spider-Man is more than a little spooked. Appropriate music, ala "Night on Bald Mountain" accompanies this.

DORMAMMU

Who dares to breach my realm? Who dares disturb Dormammu?

MAESTRA

(Half whispered, to Doom) Be careful what you say! Demon-Lords are liars and tricksters! Anything you say could become a binding contract!

DOCTOR DOOM

(Arrogantly, half-whispered to Maestra)
Let the Demon beware. I am his better!

DORMAMMU

Speak! What cur scratches at my door?

53

DOCTOR DOOM

No cringing cur am I, Dormammu.
Victor Von Doom has ripped open this portal and summoned you here.

DORMAMMU

Doom? Ah, yes...Dormammu remembers you, Earth-worm. Once before, you dared burrow into my Dark Dimension-- and paid the price. How pleasant it was turning your face into a ravaged, smoldering, ruin...

DOCTOR DOOM

Enough! Your idle reminiscences do not interest me. By the mystic laws that govern all dimensions, it is my right to name a prize and challenge you...to combat!

DORMAMMU

What prize do you seek?

DOCTOR DOOM

The freedom of Cynthia Von Doom.

DORMAMMU

Is that all? You want only some miserable wretch from the pits?
(He laughs horrifyingly).

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DOCTOR DOOM

Here is my champion--Spider-Man. Either forfeit the prize, Dormammu, or wrestle him for it, and when he defeats you...

DORMAMMU

Ridiculous. I would slay him in an instant. But this..."prize" you want is not worth exerting myself over. Since you choose to use a champion, I shall too. Do you agree to the

Standard Rules?

MAESTRA

(Urgent half-whisper to Doom)

Doom! Don't trust him--!

DOCTOR DOOM

(To Dormammu) Agreed.

With a thunderous explosion and in a cloud of sulfurous fumes, Leviathan, a huge, powerful, brutish monster enters Doom's lab through the portal, if possible and immediately hurls himself at Spider-Man.

DORMAMMU

Here is my champion! Leviathan!

(He laughs horrifyingly)

They battle. Almost immediately, Leviathan tackles Spider-Man and they crash out through a wall and into the darkened city. Spotlights follow them. The fight rages through the streets and over the rooftops, Leviathan's strength versus Spider-Man's speed and agility. Leviathan is the aggressor, and has the upper hand most of the time. Exciting "battle music" plays.

55

VERY IMPORTANT NOTE: This is not a fight in the boxing sense, nor should there be any such fights in this show, Spider-Man should be leaping, dodging with spectacular acrobatic moves, and swinging around. Leviathan should smash cars, walls, etc. in his attempt to get Spider-Man. He may snap off light posts and swing them like baseball bats, throw mailboxes, etc. always narrowly missing. Spider-Man may push over a chimney or something on Leviathan, but it won't hurt him. This is the key to "fights" in this play, and, in general, in Marvel Comics. There is a great deal of spectacular action and danger, but very seldom is anyone hit. Generally, the characters who do take the occasional blows are the thick-hided, armored, or monstrous ones (like the Thing, or Armadillo, or Sister Scrap Iron). There should be no "real" violence to human-looking characters. Ever.

At a climactic point, Leviathan topples an abandoned building over on Spider-Man, who lays still, only his head and shoulders poking out from under the rubble, apparently defeated. Leviathan stands atop the rubble. His roars proclaim his triumph. Doom looks shattered.

Maestra is heartbroken that this brave young man should be struck down. Dormammu gloats. The music is grim and somber.

MAESTRA

Oh, no...no--!

DORMAMMU

Your champion is finished, Doom!
Concede the match! And beg me not
to vent my anger over this annoyance
on your wretched mother!

Doctor Doom is crushed. His head is down, he's lost everything. Maestra still looks out at Spider-Man, hoping.

DOCTOR DOOM

Do not hurt her...please! The
victory...belongs to y--

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Maestra sees Spider-Man stir.

MAESTRA

Doom, wait! Look!

Doom joins Maestra watching Spider-Man (through a window or through the hole in the wall). Spider-Man is struggling to rise. Leviathan, feeling the rubble move beneath him stamps his foot trying to thump the mass of stuff--and Spider-Man--back down. The Spider-Man theme starts quietly. He's trying to lift the tons of debris crushing him--but it's too heavy. He fall back.

DOCTOR DOOM

It's no use! He is finished.

MAESTRA

(Emotionally) He doesn't seem to know
it, yet. Look. He's trying again.

Slowly, painfully, Spider-Man raises the tons of debris. Leviathan jumps up and down on top of the pile, but it doesn't stop Spider-Man. The music builds.

DOCTOR DOOM

This...cannot be! Spider-Man is not strong enough.

MAESTRA

Not on the outside, maybe. Come on, Spider-Man!

Triumph! Spider-Man hurls the tons of debris away. Leviathan is sent sprawling. The music crescendoes.

MAESTRA

He did it!

57

Maestra is ecstatic. Doom doesn't show it as much, but he, too, is caught up in the moment and is almost openly rooting for Spider-Man. Battle music begins again.

Angry now, fighting with his strength as well as his speed and agility (i.e. throwing a VW at Leviathan), Spider-Man outmaneuvers, outclasses and defeats Leviathan, ultimately webbing him into helpless capture. Spider-Man takes a bow as Doom proclaims his victory. The music crescendoes, and ends.

DOCTOR DOOM

Behold, Dormammu! My champion is victorious!

Dormammu shrieks a horrible, howling scream of rage.

DOCTOR DOOM

The prize! Surrender the prize, Dormammu!

Spider-Man, a bit sore and aching, limps back to the lab, dragging Leviathan, who he dumps into the portal. Dormammu is furious.

DORMAMMU

Leviathan--! You shall suffer in the pits for this!

Maestra tends the bruised Spider-Man. Doom notices this, and is somewhat disturbed by it.

MAESTRA

Let me help you! You were wonderful--!
Magnificent!

Doom focuses again on the matter at hand.

DOCTOR DOOM

Bring forth my mother, Dormammu!

58

Dormammu is snarling as three demons, Scratcher, Biter, and Laff, who will be introduced later, bring forth Doom's mother--in rags, shackled and gagged. Doom can barely contain his excitement.

DOCTOR DOOM

Release her! Now!

DORMAMMU

Stupid mortal. You agreed to the "standard rules". Obviously, you do not know some of the particulars--the extremely fine print, if you will. Despite your champion's victory, if you want your mother back, you must provide me another slave of equal value...

Dormammu points at Maestra, leering evilly.

DORMAMMU

Her!

DOCTOR DOOM

Maestra--?!

SPIDER-MAN

What?!

MAESTRA

You're kidding.

Doom struggles with himself for a second, in absolute mental agony. Looking down, fists clenched he speaks through gritted teeth.

DOCTOR DOOM

Take her.

MAESTRA

No!

59

Maestra begins to make a mystic gesture to protect herself, but Doom zaps her into unconsciousness with the stun-blaster built into his gauntlet. Spider-Man catches her as she falls.

SPIDER-MAN

Hey! Are you crazy?

Spider-Man lays Maestra down gently, then faces Doom. Doom picks up a briefcase, opens it to reveal millions of dollars inside, and tosses it to Spider-Man.

DOCTOR DOOM

This is no longer your affair.

Take your money and begone!

Doom goes to grab Maestra, to drag her to the portal. All this while, and all through the rest of this scene, the demons, including Dormammu, are enjoying this spectacle, and Doom's mother is in agony. Obviously, she does not approve. Spider-Man throws the briefcase down and grapples with Doom, preventing him from grabbing Maestra.

DOCTOR DOOM

Out of my way, cretin!

SPIDER-MAN

Leave her alone!

Doom hurls Spider-Man away from him. Spider-Man is exhausted, after all. Doom turns toward Maestra again--but in the precious seconds Spider-Man bought her, Maestra has recovered a bit. She makes some mystic signs and vanishes in a puff of smoke. Doom turns toward Spider-Man, furious.

DOCTOR DOOM

She's gone! Idiot! This is your fault!

SPIDER-MAN

My pleasure. Don't mention it.

60

DOCTOR DOOM

Listen to me, fool! Listen carefully!
This mystic candle (he gestures toward the candle) is all that prevents Dormammu and his demon hordes from passing through the portal and laying waste to the Earth. The candle will last only until dawn. The portal must be closed before then. That is how long you have to find the Maestra and bring her--or drag her back here.

SPIDER-MAN

So you can complete your grisly transaction with Dormammu? No way. Not for all the money in the world. I feel sorry for your mother, Doom, but I can't help you condemn someone else to take her place!

Doom walks over to a control panel where there is an impressive looking red lever, locked open with safeties and surrounded with warning signs. He removes the safeties.

DOCTOR DOOM

Is there someone in this city you
love, Spider-Man? Several people,
perhaps?

This is the Doomsday Switch. It
triggers a carefully hidden
disintegration Bomb, which will
completely destroy this city and
everyone in it, except for this
building, of course, which is
protected from D-radiation.

If my mother is not free by dawn,
when the portal must be closed--
then I shall wipe out this city!

61

SPIDER-MAN

No...come on, Doom! That's too
monstrous even for you!

DOCTOR DOOM

Bring me the Maestra, Spider-Man...
help me exchange her for my mother...
or you will see how cold and monstrous
Doom can be.

Spider-Man hesitates, then starts for the window.

SPIDER-MAN

Okay, okay!

DOCTOR DOOM

No tricks, Spider-Man. Fail me, or
betray me--and this city is dust.

Spider-Man leaves, going out into the blackened city and Dormammu laughs hideously. Furiously, Doom turns toward the portal.

DORMAMMU

You know he will never find her!
She'll never come back. You have
lost, you pitiful flea!

DOCTOR DOOM

No! I swear to you, Dormammu, come
dawn, my mother and I shall be
together again!

DORMAMMU

I shall remember those brave, foolish
words, mortal. (He laughs. Dramatic
music also underscores the significance
of this exchange.)

62

Suddenly, a servant's voice comes over the intercom, and his face appears on the screen. Behind him, in super-scientific looking cells are Zaphammer, Steel Squid, and the Armadillo.

SERVANT

Excuse me, O mighty Lord Doom. This
is Wolfgang, sir, your humble servant.
I wish to report that the automatic
security system captured three rather
unusual intruders, who were skulking
around the main entrance, and deposited
them in the dungeon. They say they're
wrestlers. How should I dispose of them,
sir?

Doom looks thoughtful.

DOCTOR DOOM

Hm. Perhaps...I shall employ them.

Tell them I want them to find someone
for me--and drag her back here.
Offer them...one million dollars. Each.

The lights go to black at the lab, including the portal.

63

SCENE 4

A spotlight picks up Spider-Man at a pay phone not far from Doom's lab. He dials, and in Peter Parker's apartment, the phone rings. A spot lights just the phone and its immediate vicinity as it rings. Mary Jane comes out of the bedroom in a robe and up the stairs carrying a flashlight (and lit by a spotlight) to answer the phone.

MARY JANE

Hello.

SPIDER-MAN

It's me. Listen, I'm going to be
home kind of late. I hope. I mean,
uh, something's come up...

MARY JANE

Does it have to do with the black out?

SPIDER-MAN

Yeah, uh, look, I can't talk now.
I've got to go see Doctor Strange.
So, anyway, just relax...it's just a
little problem. No big deal, but,
uh...if you don't hear from me by,
say, an hour before dawn, uh...grab
a cab and head out of town. Way out
of town. Okay? And take Aunt May
with you, okay? Bye.

Spider-Man hangs up and wall-crawls/web-swings away into the darkness toward Doctor Strange's house. Mary Jane is understandably distraught.

MARY JANE

Peter! Peter?!

Mary Jane hangs the phone up, very upset and puzzled. She grabs some clothes and goes back into the bedroom. The lights fade.

64

SCENE 5

The lights rise in Doctor Strange's house. Doctor Strange is levitating, in the lotus position, in a trance. Spider-Man knocks on his door, then enters. He is puzzled by Doctor Strange's trance state.

SPIDER-MAN

Doc? (Then, noticing that Doctor Strange is floating in mid-air.)
Huh! What up--? Doc!

Suddenly, a brilliant pinpoint of light, accompanied by an eerie sound effect is visible. It starts far across the arena, flitting and streaking across the city toward Strange's house. It comes inside, darts around, and winds up focused on the amulet at Strange's throat. Then it vanishes and Strange, simultaneously awakens. He stands. No matter how many times he's seen this sort of thing with Doctor Strange, it stills freaks Spider-Man out.

SPIDER-MAN

Hello?

DOCTOR STRANGE

Sorry I wasn't all here to greet you.
I was abroad in the city in my astral form, trying to help where I could.

Doctor Strange pours himself a bubbling green drink from a weird pitcher. He takes a sip.

DOCTOR STRANGE

Would you like some?

SPIDER-MAN

What is it? No, wait--! I don't

want to know. None for me, thanks!

65

DOCTOR STRANGE

There's looting going on all over.
Too bad the Fantastic Four are out
of town. So are the Avengers, except
for Iron Man, and the X-Men except
for Storm and Wolverine. Those three
are out there guarding against vandals
and thieves. I manipulated things a
bit so they'd meet--and as I expected,
they joined forces. They'll do better
working as a team.

Now, what can I do for you?

SPIDER-MAN

Well, Doctor Doom is going to blow
up the city unless I find the
sorceress Maestra and help Doom give
her to Dormammu so that...

Strange is shocked, and suddenly very serious.

DOCTOR STRANGE

What? Wait! This sounds important.
Maybe I'd better draw the facts directly
from your subconscious

Strange's amulet glows, bathing Spider-Man in eerie light. There is a sound effect. In seconds it is over.

DOCTOR STRANGE

I see. The situation is, indeed, serious.
Doom is tampering with forces even he
cannot comprehend. Every moment that
portal remains open increases the danger

of Dormammu and his hordes overrunning

66

the Earth. You cannot imagine the full extent of Dormammu's power. He would do more harm to humankind than all the wars plagues, famines and natural disasters in history.

SPIDER-MAN

My bet is that Doom doesn't want that to happen any more than we do.

DOCTOR STRANGE

Of course not. But it's... worrisome.

SPIDER-MAN

Personally, Doc, worrying about the city being vaporized is kind of all I can handle. What are we going to do?

DOCTOR STRANGE

We must find the Maestra.

Strange begins a conjuration.

SPIDER-MAN

And turn her over to Doom?

DOCTOR STRANGE

No. But she obviously knows Doom well. Perhaps she can help us reason with him. And since she helped open the portal, she may be a great deal of help in closing it.

Doctor Strange completes his conjuration, and Niff the Imp appears in a flash of light and a puff of smoke. He is, understandably agitated and disoriented.

67

NIFF

Wah-hoo-hoo! Whoa!

SPIDER-MAN

Hey! What--who's that?

DOCTOR STRANGE

He's a tracking imp. I thought he might be of some help finding the Maestra, so I conjured him up.

NIFF

Boy, did you conjure me. Yanked me right out of my nice, warm cocoon. I was watching Earth TV, as a matter of fact, on the interdimensional cable. No problem, though. If you called me, it must be important.

Niff extends a hand (paw?) to Doctor Strange, then to Spider-Man.

NIFF

I'm Niff the Imp...

SPIDER-MAN

Niff?

NIFF

Right. And you must be 'Pider-Man. And this, of course, is the inter-dimensionally renowned Doctor 'Trange. the 'Orcerer 'Upreme!

SPIDER-MAN

Sure your name isn't "Sniff"?

68

NIFF

Nope! Why would you 'ay 'uch a thing,
'Pider-Man?

DOCTOR STRANGE

We must get going. Time is fleeting.
Niff, we seek a sorceress called La
Maestra de las Sombras.

NIFF

A 'orceress? No problem. But may
I have 'omething to drink first?
I'm parched.

DOCTOR STRANGE

(Indicating the weird pitcher) Have
some Kool-Aid. There.

Niff drinks. Spider-Man does a take.

SPIDER-MAN

Kool-Aid?

The three head off into the night, and the lights go black on Strange's house.

69

SCENE 6

The lights rise once more on Doom's lab. The portal, too, lights up again, and we see Doom's mother, demons, creatures, etc. inside. Doom is pacing. He throws some switches and a monitor

(TV) screen comes to life. So do the big screens, crackling with that between-channels white static.

DOCTOR DOOM

Computer! Report.

COMPUTER VOICE

(Stiffly, mechanically) No luck, sir. I am scanning the city. But I cannot locate the Maestra. I have lost track of Spider-Man, too. I am sorry. He moves so quickly.

DOCTOR DOOM

(Wearily) I should never have allowed my techno-servants to build you. I should have done it myself. One cannot get good forced labor these days. Perhaps I shall have you scrapped. Along with the techno-servants.

COMPUTER

I am picking something up. Three beings of great power.

The TV screen and the big screens show Iron Man, Wolverine and Storm together on a darkened street, walking toward the camera. They look wary, and as though they are searching for something.

DOCTOR DOOM

Hmm. Iron Man...Wolverine...and Storm.

The screens show Wolverine starting into a trot, Iron Man blasting off, and Storm soaring aloft. The effect should be that they have figured a clue, and their quest has become more urgent.

70

COMPUTER

They are seeking the source of the black out. My guess is that they

will find it before long. Unless you close the portal, turn off the dimension-piercing machines, and return electrical power to the city, I think you should prepare for an attack!

The Computer switches off the screens.

DOCTOR DOOM

Victor Von Doom...

Doom pushes a button and a smoked glass capsule rises from the floor. Inside we see a vague, metallic, man-like shape (Ultron).

DOCTOR DOOM

...is always prepared for attack.

He pats the capsule, which is apparently very reassuring to him, like having an automatic weapon in your pocket on a midnight stroll through Bedford-Stuyvesant.

Doom pushes the button again and the capsule sinks again.

DOCTOR DOOM

Yes...my defense is secure. And, yet...much is at stake here tonight. Perhaps...

Doom switches on the computer again.

DOCTOR DOOM

Computer. Choose three subjects from among the millions of unsuspecting people in this city--three who are suitable for genetic modification.

Use Somna-radiation to put them into sleepwalking trances...and bring them here.

The computer clicks and whirrs. There is an eerie sound effect. Three men, planted in the audience go into trances--and spotlights find them as they do. They make their way to Doom's auxiliary lab. Doom, too, goes to the auxiliary lab and busily prepares a large machine, which incorporates three man-sized capsules (different than the capsule with Ultron in it). One by one the subjects arrive, and Doom puts them each into a capsule. Finally all is ready. The Somna-radiation sound stops.

DOCTOR DOOM

These three will do nicely. They shall be my first line of defense... once they are transformed.

COMPUTER

My sensors show that all systems are go.

DOCTOR DOOM

Excellent!

Doom laughs and throws a switch. There is much crackling, eerie lights, and sound effects. The tubes cloud over with energy, becoming opaque, obscuring the men inside. The men in the tubes are transforming. After a dramatic moment, they emerge from the tubes as Three Monstrous Figures, later to be identified as Flea, Slug, and Tsetse. Doom is pleased with the results and laughs an evil, triumphant laugh.

Doom's laughter still echoes as the lights fade on the lab. Doom and the three subjects exit the performance area.

72

SCENE 7

Niff, Strange, and Spider-Man have made their way across town. Spotlights pick them up. They don't see, but the audience does see the wrestlers sneaking around nearby. They are also lit.

Niff is like a hunting dog, sniffing and constantly looking around, cocking an ear, etc. He is often on all fours. He sniffs at a fire hydrant--then backs away quickly.

NIFF

Yuck!

SPIDER-MAN

Quit fooling around. This is important.

NIFF

I'm perfectly 'erious. 'Niffing out a 'Orceress isn't 'o 'imple, you know.

Suddenly, Niff tenses.

NIFF

Hey! 'Top for a minute!

He points, like a hunting dog, at a rooftop. Spider-Man is puzzled. Strange understands, though.

DOCTOR STRANGE

Maestra! Show yourself.

There is a puff of smoke and Maestra appears where Niff pointed. Spider-Man does a take.

73

MAESTRA

So...Doctor Strange, the Sorcerer Supreme himself is in cahoots with Doom.

DOCTOR STRANGE

No. I am not.

MAESTRA

Why else would you hunt me down,
except to capture me and give me to
Doom--so the threat to your city can
be ended?

SPIDER-MAN

We just want your help, that's all.
We figure that you might be able to
help us persuade Doom to close the
portal--without bloodshed.

MAESTRA

How?

SPIDER-MAN

Well...you know him better than we
do. I think.

MAESTRA

Even if I trust you...what do I care
about your problem. Why should I risk
my neck to save your city?

Spider-Man approaches her, up the wall.

SPIDER-MAN

Maybe you're the only one who can.

74

As Spider-Man faces Maestra, who's slowly being won over, the Wrestlers spot Maestra and begin sneaking up to attack from behind her.

Strange and Niff, still on the street, don't see the Wrestlers.

MAESTRA

If you were me, you'd risk it.

Wouldn't you?

SPIDER-MAN

With great power comes great responsibility. If I had the power to save a city full of people--and didn't try-- I'd feel as though their deaths were my fault. If you aren't doing what you can for other people...well, I guess you're like Doom.

Maestra's head lowers at the mention of Doom's name. Though she knows what he's really like, now, she's still in love with him. Spider-Man holds her by the upper arms, in a comforting way.

SPIDER-MAN

Hmm. You care about him, don't you?

The Wrestlers are about to spring. Spider-Man senses danger. He looks around. Maestra doesn't notice.

SPIDER-MAN

Hey...

The wrestlers leap out of hiding and surround Maestra and Spider-Man, who is still right beside her. Spider-Man still has one hand on her arm.

STEEL SQUID

That's it Spider-Man! You just hold her for us! Don't move.

75

SPIDER-MAN

I thought I was getting danger fibs. My Spider-Sense is never wrong--but I'm too dumb to pay attention to it sometimes.

Maestra sizes up the situation--wrongly. She yanks her arm away from Spider-Man.

MAESTRA

You set me up--! So your friends
could trap me! And I trusted you--!

SPIDER-MAN

Maestra, I didn't...I'm not one of
them--!

With a mystic gesture, Maestra causes a cage to form around Spider-man. Another gesture causes it to levitate, with Spider-man inside, high up in the air.

MAESTRA

Liar!

On the street, Strange and Niff are shocked. On the roof, the wrestlers, uncertain of what just happened, circle Maestra warily. She's frightened, but no easy mark. She dodges as Steel Squid tries to grab her, narrowly avoids a cracking, sparking blow of Zaphammer's hammer--but bumps into and bounces off Armadillo as she tries to run. Undaunted, she makes mystic signs and thick smoke fills the air around them. The wrestlers thrash about in confusion. Maestra levitates above the smoke and flies over several buildings landing on the street some distance away. Strange, levitating also, follows. Niff follows, too, on foot. The wrestlers make their way down off the roof, look around in vain for Maestra, and head the wrong way into the darkness. They eventually leave the performance area. Strange confronts Maestra.

76

MAESTRA

Stay away from me!

DOCTOR STRANGE

Maestra, listen to me--!

MAESTRA

No!

Maestra fires a mystic blast at Strange, who deflects it with a mystic shield. They begin a sorcerers' duel which ranges through the streets and over the rooftops, complete with many light, sound, and special effects. Niff grabs a garbage can lid and uses it like a shield to deflect a few

stray blasts. Maestra is always falling back, always trying to get away, but she is also doing most of the offensive blasts. Strange is the pursuer, but is fighting mostly defensively. He's holding back, he doesn't want to hurt her. Finally, Niff, trying to help tugs on Doc's cape and offers him a garbage cab lid too. Strange whirls, thinking it's a sneak attack.

DOCTOR STRANGE

What? Niff--?! Not now--!

Maestra uses the momentary distraction to get in a clean shot at Strange. Caught with his defenses down, he's hit and stunned. Niff is beside himself.

NIFF

Oh, no! I think I 'crewed up!

Maestra stands triumphantly over the fallen Doctor Strange and the cowering Niff.

77

MAESTRA

I could destroy you, Strange. But I
won't...this time. Now leave me alone...
or next time, I'll show you no mercy.

Maestra, still angry casts her gaze up at the still-caged Spider-man.

MAESTRA

As for you...you dirty backstrokes!
You're gonna get yours this time...like this!

Maestra blasts Spider-man with a dazzling blast of mystic energy--and Spider-man explodes into thousands of red and blue Nerf balls which cascade down from the cage and bounce around the arena. Niff is horrified. Satisfied, Maestra teleports away, vanishing in a puff of smoke. Strange is recovering, but she's gone by the time he struggles to his feet.

DOCTOR STRANGE

She's gone!

NIFF

And 'Pider-Man's gone to pieces!
What are we going to do?

DOCTOR STRANGE

I...don't know.

Strange and Niff limp off toward his house. The spots on them fade, and they duck out of the performance area as Dormammu's laughter echoes throughout the dark arena.

Then, the music rises, and so do the house lights.

END ACT I

ACT II

The house lights dim and the entre'act begins. Just as they did during the overture, the big screens will have action-oriented preview vignettes from the upcoming act, or stills.

SCENE 1

A spotlight illuminates Zaphammer, Steel Squid, and Armadillo moping on a street corner in the still blacked-out city.

STEEL SQUID

We're never going to find that Maestra
woman.

ARMADILLO

I'll never get to open my chili parlor.

ZAPHAMMER

Why, my dear compatriots, are we doing
things the hard way?

Zaphammer is seized with an idea. He strides over to a jewelry store window.

ZAPHAMMER

The city's blacked out. The police
are all busy. No one's around. Let's
forget about the millions we aren't
going to get...

Zaphammer smashes the jewelry store window with his hammer. A burglar alarm starts howling.
He starts scooping up loot.

ZAPHAMMER

...and simply help ourselves to some
profit!

2

Steel Squid shrugs, pulls a battered suitcase out of the garbage, and starts helping Zaphammer
clean out the store window. Zaphammer casually whacks the alarm device with his hammer,
silencing it. Armadillo is horrified by all this. He isn't really a bad guy.

ARMADILLO

Stop it! Stop it!

STEEL SQUID

What's your problem?

ARMADILLO

This is wrong. We can't do this!

STEEL SQUID

Why not? We were gonna mug Spider-
Man, remember? This is better.
Nobody gets hurt. Come on!

Armadillo finally realizes the error of his ways.

ARMADILLO

I never should'a gone along with you
guys. What's the matter with me?

I--I was ready to throw my scruples
into a chili pot and do...bad things.
I was gonna sell myself for a third
of a million dollars!

STEEL SQUID

Hey, don't worry, Armie, there's a
cool six or seven million dollars
here, easy!

3

ARMADILLO

It's not enough. When you sell your-
self, whatever the price you get isn't
enough. That's what the Thing said.
And he's right.

Armadillo takes a step toward Steel Squid and Zaphammer, ready to fight.

ARMADILLO

I'm not gonna steal. And I'm not gonna
stand here and let you do it, either.

That statement gains Zaphammer's attention. He stops ransacking the window and turns toward Armadillo. Zaphammer and Steel Squid move slowly, threateningly toward Armadillo.

ZAPHAMMER

Oh? You plan to stop us, I presume?

STEEL SQUID

You and what army, Armie?

Suddenly, there is a roar like a jet overhead and Iron Man comes flying in across the city. (Note: If this is too difficult, he can arrive on his jet skates).

In a rush of wind, Storm also flies in.

Wolverine races in on foot, scurrying through the streets. Music, the heroes theme, accompanies these entrances.

ZAPHAMMER

(As each hero arrives) Iron Man!
Storm! Wolverine!

The three heroes face off against the three wrestlers. Armadillo is scared.

4

ARMADILLO

I didn't--! I wasn't gonna--! I
was only trying to--!

IRON MAN

(Pointing to Armadillo) You! Stand
aside.
(To Storm and Wolverine) He's
innocent. I overheard him trying
to stop the other two with my built-
in audio amplifiers.

Much relieved, Armadillo steps aside. The heroes move in. Zaphammer and Steel Squid brace for combat.

STORM

Surrender!

Wolverine pops his claws.

WOLVERINE

Or don't. Fine with me.

With a shout, Zaphammer and Steel Squid hurl themselves at the heroes. Zaphammer slams his hammer down on Iron Man's head. There is the usual crack and shower of sparks, but Iron Man is completely unhurt, unmoved, and unimpressed. Steel Squid misses his lunge at Wolverine, who ducks. Steel Squid goes sprawling. Battle music plays. Note: Different battle music will be used for different characters.

IRON MAN

Nice try. But this armor isn't for
show.

Zaphammer grabs Iron Man, attempting a wrestling hold, but Iron Man is far stronger. He peels Zaphammer off and throws him into a wall with a bang.

5

IRON MAN

It makes me very strong. But the
best things about it are the little
gadgets built into it...

He points his repossessor at the woozy Zaphammer.

IRON MAN

...like these. I call them Repulsor
Rays.

Iron Man fires his Repulsor Rays at Zaphammer, blowing him through a wall (or into a dumpster if the wall is too difficult). The Repulsors should be accompanied by a distinctive light and sound effect.

Meanwhile, Steel Squid has picked himself up. Wolverine, eager to fight, slashes a lamppost in half as he strides toward Steel Squid. Seeing that, and seeing Zaphammer get zapped, instead of facing off against Wolverine and Storm, Steel Squid runs. Storm soars into the air and blocks his path with lightning bolts.

STORM

There is no place to run where Storm
cannot bring the elements themselves
to bear against you!

Wolverine catches up with Steel Squid (since his path is blocked). Steel Squid swings at Wolverine, who ducks, then shreds Steel Squid's shirt (which is armored or padded in some way)

with his claws. Steel Squid looks at his shirt--and, though he, himself, is not hurt, he's scared enough to surrender.

STEEL SQUID

Okay, okay, I give!

WOLVERINE

Nah! C'mon! Make my day!

6

Storm lands nearby.

STORM

Wolverine, no! Sheathe your claws.

Iron Man approaches, pushing Zaphammer along in front of him (having pulled him out of the rubble while Wolverine and Storm caught Steel Squid). Armadillo follows dutifully.

IRON MAN

All right. Do you three know who or what caused this blackout?

Zaphammer and Steel Squid won't talk, but Armadillo tries to help.

ARMADILLO

Um...maybe Doctor Doom had something to do with it.

The heroes react to the name Doom.

STORM

Doom? Why do you think Doom is responsible.

ARMADILLO

Well, when we were at his house before, it looked like he had lots and lots of electricity. Maybe he took it all.

WOLVERINE

Huh. He probably just has his own generator.

IRON MAN

True, but...what if he did drain the city's electrical grid? It's possible...

7

STORM

If he did...then it's to further some evil plan.

WOLVERINE

So let's pay him a visit.

Iron Man turns to Zaphammer and Steel Squid.

IRON MAN

You two--! Go to the police station and turn yourselves in. If you don't...well, we'll let Wolverine track you down...

WOLVERINE

And nobody'll hold me back next time.

Zaphammer and Steel Squid, scared straight, leave.

STEEL SQUID and ZAPHAMMER

(in unison)

Okay! Okay, whatever your say!
Right! Got it. On our way.

Iron Man turns to Armadillo.

IRON MAN

Why don't you just go home, friend.

ARMADILLO

(Enthusiastically) Yep! And I'm
going to work hard, and keep my nose
clean, and things'll work out for me!
Yessir!

The Armadillo strides off happily. The heroes are a bit puzzled, but get back to business.

8

IRON MAN

Come on. We've got a date with Doom
at the Latverian Embassy.

The heroes stride off into the darkness (the spotlights on them fade) and, unseen, exit the performance area.

9

SCENE 2

The lights rise at Doctor Strange's sanctum. Strange is pacing, pondering. Niff has placed the bag of red and blue scarifying balls on a table, and is scrutinizing one of them, looking for signs of life, perhaps.

NIFF

I'm very 'orry that I 'crewed up, Doc
'Trange. But I'll make it up to you,
I 'wear! I'll do anything you 'ay!

Niff looks at Strange.

NIFF

'O? What do you 'ay, Doc?

DOCTOR STRANGE

I don't know. Putting Pider-Man--I mean Spider-Man back together again is vitally important. I know the spell--but even I don't have enough power.

Suddenly, there is a knock on the door. Niff answers and Mary Jane enters. Seeing Niff, she does a take, but being the wife of Spider-Man has given her a high tolerance for weird things. After an initial start, she takes it in stride.

NIFF

'Omeone to 'ee you, 'Trange! 'Omeone pretty!

MARY JANE

Uh...hi. (She looks at Niff, then at Strange, shrugs, and decides to press on). Doctor Strange? I'm Mary Jane.

10

DOCTOR STRANGE

I know. Welcome to my Sanctum Sanctorum.

Mary Jane walks in amid the mystic clutter and Victorian furnishings, looking around as if Spider-Man might be there somewhere. Strange, knowing that this is Spider-Man's wife tries to stay between her and the scarifying balls, to prevent her from seeing them (as if there were any chance she'd understand their significance).

MARY JANE

The reason I'm here is that I got this strange--I mean weird phone call from...uh, my husband.

DOCTOR STRANGE

I know your husband is Spider-Man,

Mary Jane. I am a sorcerer, after all. We sorcerers have a knack for seeing most clearly that which is most carefully hidden. Don't worry though, his secret is safe with me.

MARY JANE

Oh. Well, he said he was coming here. He sounded strange--er, odd. I'm worried about him. Have you seen him?

Strange casts a nervous glance at the scarifying balls.

DOCTOR STRANGE

No, I haven't seen much of him, lately...

Mary Jane manages to glimpse the scarifying balls. Idly, and much to Strange's chagrin, she picks a few up, bounces them, tosses them up in the air, etc. Niff is amused to no end.

11

MARY JANE

I don't understand it. He said he was coming here.

DOCTOR STRANGE

Well, he, uh, isn't here...

NIFF

(Under his breath) Not all here, anyway.

Mary Jane drops the balls and heads for the door, looking determined.

MARY JANE

Well, he must be bouncing around somewhere. I'm going to find him

if it takes all night! Seeya, Doc.
And you, too, Tiger! (She gives
Niff a pinch on the cheek.)

Mary Jane leaves, fades into the dark streets, and exits the performance area. Meanwhile, Niff turns to Strange, lovestruck.

NIFF

'He called me "Tiger"! Doctor, I
think I'm in love with a married
woman!

Strange is pacing again, worried, thinking.

DOCTOR STRANGE

Hm.. We can't put Spider-Man back
together, yet. It isn't wise to
approach Doom alone. Doom respects
only power. We'll need some very
strong back-up. Let's see...

12

Strange gets an idea and rushes over to the Orb of Agamotto. He opens it. As he does, the big screens light up with an image of swirling mists--which is exactly what is visible in the Orb.

DOCTOR STRANGE

I know! I can summon Iron Man, Storm
and Wolverine! They'll help,
gladly. First, I must locate them
using the Orb of Agamotto.

Strange chants a spell, making mystic gestures over the Orb. Mists swirl in the Orb, and on the screens. Niff joins Strange, peering into the Orb.

DOCTOR STRANGE

Let Agamotto's all-seeing Orb reveal,
What shrouds of dark and drear conceal.

Let the magical eye pierce the veil of
night, And bring those I seek into sight!

The Orb, and the screens clear to show first the Latverian Embassy, then inside the main entrance, where Iron Man, Storm, and Wolverine are battling against Doom's automated defenses. These may include ray blasts, knock-out gasses, mechanical tentacles or claws, steel nets, and/or other high tech, diabolical things, depending upon what special effects are possible. (The simpler the better, since this is a very brief sequence and not a major battle). We see Iron Man captured, after a heroic struggle --then Storm. Wolverine is caught in a steel net, or by a metal claw.

NIFF

'Uffering 'uccotash!

DOCTOR STRANGE

They're already at Doom's place!

NIFF

And they're in 'erious trouble!

13

Wolverine, using his adamantium claws, slashes his way out of his predicament, and for a moment, it looks as though he'll be able to free the others.

NIFF

Yahoo! Go, Wolverine! (To Strange)

He's my 'pecial favorite 'cause he's

'hort and furry--like me.

Suddenly, Wolverine is zapped from behind by a ray blast from a shadowy figure. The blast seems to come from the creature's forehead. (Later we'll learn that this is Flea, one of the new servants Doom has created from the subjects he "recruited" in act one.) Another shadowy figure, this one huge and lumpy (revealed later as Slug, another transformed "recruit") grabs Wolverine roughly and holds him up, forcing his face toward a third shadowy figure, this one with big, glowing eyes (Tsetse) that radiate an eerie light into Wolverine's eyes. Wolverine goes limp, and as the three shadowy figures drag him away, the Orb and the screen go misty again. Battle music, and then an eerie strain, play through this sequence. The music ends and the screens go blank as Strange closes the Orb.

NIFF

Doc, who were those 'trange--I mean weird, 'cary-looking guys! What did they do to Wolverine?

DOCTOR STRANGE

I'm not sure. But, obviously, Doom was, and is expecting to be attacked--and he's well-prepared. We're definitely going to need help.

NIFF

Heavy-duty help. 'Uper-heavy-duty help. But who--? I know a few real tough, nasty, 'melly Trolls. They'll do anything if you bribe 'em. Food usually works...

14

DOCTOR STRANGE

Niff...you just gave me an idea!

Strange hurriedly rummages for, and finds, the Yellow Pages. He holds the book up in triumph.

DOCTOR STRANGE

Aha! The Yellow Pages!

Strange rifles through the book.

NIFF

You mean Earth-Trolls are listed in the phone book?

DOCTOR STRANGE

No...but two Heroes for Hire called Power Man and Iron Fist are. Ah... here's their ad.

As Strange finds the ad it appears on the big screens. It reads as follows:

HEROES FOR HIRE

Need somebody super strong and bullet-
proof on your side?
Would you like to have the world's
greatest martial artist fighting your
battles for you? Call POWER MAN and
IRON FIST
Investigations*Security*Bodyguard Service
No Honest Job Refused
Reasonable Rates
555-3247

Also included in the ad are pictures of Power Man lifting a car and Iron Fist karate-chopping a steel beam in half. Their names are under their pictures.

15

Niff reads the ad in the Yellow Pages aloud.

NIFF

"Heroes for Hire. Need 'omebody 'uper
'trong and bulletproof on your 'ide?"
Hmm. That must be Power Man. "Would
you like to have the world's greatest
martial artist fighting your battles
for you?" That must be Iron Fist.
"Call Power Man and Iron Fist."

Strange dials the number. As Power Man answers the phone, we see him, foreground, and Iron Fist, sitting on a desk in the background (in the lotus position) in their forty-second street office. Note that it is lit by flashlights and candles.

POWER MAN

Power Man here. If you're callin'
about the black out, I ain't that

kind of Power Man.

DOCTOR STRANGE

This is Doctor Strange. Listen, the city, and possibly the world, are in deadly danger. I need your help. I'll be glad to pay your fee.

POWER MAN

Doc, we only take money for guardin' gold shipments and doin' private eye work. We don't charge for savin' the world...

Even though Power Man says the above casually enough, Iron Fist leaps up when he hears it.

POWER MAN

We'll be glad to help. You just give me your address, Doc...

16

Strange makes mystic gestures. There are light and sound effects (as there should be on all mystic gestures).

POWER MAN

...and we'll be over...

Strange makes a final, emphatic gesture and simultaneously Power Man and Iron Fist disappear in a puff of smoke in their office (on the screen) and appear in a puff of smoke in Strange's Sanctum. Power Man still holds his hands as if he were holding a phone handset.

POWER MAN

...in a flash!

Power Man does a take, quickly recovers his cool, and puts his phone hand down. Iron Fist reacts a bit more, warily striking a martial arts stance. Niff stares at Iron Fist, obviously thinking "what a weirdo." Iron Fist, likewise, regards Niff a bit suspiciously.

DOCTOR STRANGE

Thanks for coming. I'll explain the whole problem shortly. But, first, I've got to find some more help. I thought of someone else...someone very dangerous, but very powerful...

Strange floats into the levitating lotus position and concentrates. Power Man refuses to betray any wonderment. He's cool.

POWER MAN

Need the phone?

17

DOCTOR STRANGE

No. The one I seek doesn't have a phone. The only way to locate him is to extend my mystic senses out across the land...probing for his hostile, angry, karmic vibrations,

18

Strange concentrates harder. Meanwhile, Iron Fist and Niff are still regarding each other warily. Iron Fist nudges Power Man, getting his attention.

IRON FIST

(Stage whisper, to Power Man) Look at this--this creature. I've never seen anything so bizarre!

POWER MAN

(Obviously unimpressed) Huh. I seen
weirder-lookin' geeks on Forty-Second
Street. So this one's a magic geek.
Big deal. At least he don't smell bad.

Strange makes his magic teleportation gestures again. There are light and sound effects, and suddenly, in a puff of smoke, the Hulk appears. Furious as usual.

HULK

Ra-a-ahhr!

Strange, because he was expecting this, remains calm--but gets to his feet and strikes a ready, defensive pose. Iron Fist, caught totally unawares, leaps back a few feet. Niff, scared to death, leaps into Iron Fist's arms. They, for the moment, forget their mutual suspicion. Even Power Man takes a step back. The Hulk growls and faces off against the others, apparently ready to rip them all to pieces.

POWER MAN

The Hulk! Man, you sure know how
to pick 'em, Doc.

DOCTOR STRANGE

The Hulk is the strongest being on
the face of the Earth. With him on
our side, we have a chance against
Doom!

19

POWER MAN

What if he likes Doom's side better?
Or what if he decides to mash us into
jelly just for practice?

The Hulk advances menacingly. Strange makes a mystic gesture and his amulet glows. He is obviously straining to perform some difficult magical effort. There are light and sound effects

culminating with a bright red glow around the Hulk, and a buzzing sound, both of which sustain. The Hulk freezes.

POWER MAN

What'd you do to 'im?

DOCTOR STRANGE

I immobilized him...with the crimson bands of Cytorrak! I can't maintain this...for long. Hope...I can reason with him...once I catch my breath.

Niff, by now, has climbed down out of Iron Fist's arms, but sticks close by. All eyes are riveted on the Hulk, and Strange who is trying to catch his breath.

NIFF

Who is this...Hulk

IRON FIST

He's really a normal man...a scientist named Bruce Banner. But he was affected by Gamma Rays, and now, whenever he gets upset, he turns big and strong and green and becomes a rampaging monster called the Hulk!

NIFF

When does he turn back to Banner?

20

IRON FIST

When he gets tired. Usually after he's smashed whatever upset him... and whatever else is around. A city, an army...whatever.

Niff huddles closer to Iron Fist. Suddenly, the Crimson Bands of Cytorrak effect ceases. The Hulk moves a little, taking one step forward (to demonstrate to the audience that he can move).

Strange, looking exhausted, slumps into a chair. Iron Fist and Power Man tense for battle. Niff hides. But Hulk just stands there, relatively relaxed.

POWER MAN

Doc! I thought you were gonna
reason with him!

DOCTOR STRANGE

I did. Subconsciously. He will
help us.

The Hulk still looks mean, still snarls and growls, but doesn't attack anyone. Power Man, Iron Fist, and especially Niff are very wary of him. Strange, still weary, struggles to his feet and leads the unlikely group to the door.

DOCTOR STRANGE

Come! We must reach Doctor Doom's
lair while there is still time! I'll
explain on the way.

The odd bunch files out into the darkened streets. Niff is the last to exit--but, suddenly, he remembers something and runs back into the Sanctum to pick up Spider-Man's remains. Carrying the bag, he follows along. As they leave, we hear Power Man's laid-back comment:

POWER MAN

First, explain how come if there's
a blackout, your lights are still on.

21

SCENE 3

As Strange and company, hidden by darkness, make their way toward Doom's place, the lights rise in the lab, where Doom is nervously pacing. As he does, three demons, Scratcher, Biter, and Laff, a sort of demonic three stooges, taunt him from beyond the portal. Dormammu is not in sight, but Doom's mother is.

SCRATCHER

Oh, Doomsie--! Your cape's on fire!

Doom takes no heed.

BITER

Huh. He's no fun. (To Doom)
Kettlehead! Nyah, nyah.

Doom pays no attention.

LAFF

We're bein' ignorified. (Barks)
Ruff! Ruff!

Doom ignorifies the demon.

BITER

Maybe he's ignoring us because we
haven't been properly introduced!

SCRATCHER

Could be. (To Doom) Hey, Doom!
Allow me to introduce ourselves!
Scratcher, Biter, and Laff at your
service. I'm Scratcher.

BITER

I'm Biter.

22

LAFF

I'm Laff.

The Demons strike a barbershop quartet-like pose and hum, in harmony, a fanfare. Doom ignores them.

SCRATCHER

Look at that. We still can't get the
time of day out of this bum.

LAFF

(Looking at an hourglass) It's
quarter past.

Scratcher twists Laff's nose and pulls.

SCRATCHER

Birdbrain.

Scratcher suddenly gets an idea. He releases Laff.

SCRATCHER

Hey, I know how we can get a rise
outta that walking rustpot! Let's
blow out the candle! On the count
of three. Ready? One, two...

Laff blows early. Scratcher gives him a bop on the head.

SCRATCHER

Numbskull! I said three!

Hearing "three" Biter blows. Scratcher, extremely frustrated grabs each by the ear.

LAFF

Oww!

23

BITER

You said "three!"

SCRATCHER

Why I oughtta--! Let's do this
unanimously. Now!

All three demons blow toward the candle. It is entirely unaffected.

SCRATCHER

It's out! And so are we!

Doom whirls. The Demons, of course, are still safely behind the portal, and the candle is still burning--though it is noticeably shorter than it was in act one.

BITER

Hah, hah! Made ya look!

DOCTOR DOOM

(Musing to himself) How can Dormammu
abide such moronic servants?

SCRATCHER

Hey! We've been insulted!

BITER

We oughtta take him to court--!
For definition of character!

DOCTOR DOOM

Idiots.

Doom turns away, planning on ignoring the demons again.

24

LAFF

Oh, a wise guy, huh? Wait'll I get
my hands on 'im! I'll moiderize the
bum. Ruff! Ruff!

SCRATCHER

You'll get your chance! That candle
is burning down. When it burns out,
we'll be free to invade Earth! We'll
have the entire state for breakfast--

then we'll get nasty, cruel and vicious.
We'll wreak havoc! It'll be a total blast!
(To Doom) Yep, not much time left, Doomsie!

Doom turns toward the portal. The demons anger him, despite himself.

DOCTOR DOOM

There is time. Time enough to recover
the Maestra, make the exchange, and
reseal the portal--trapping you and
your cretinous ilk inside your odious
dimension and out of my sight forever!

SCRATCHER

(Mockingly) Whoa! (To the other
demons) Say, fellers, if he's so
sure he's gonna take his mommy away
from us, what do you say we make our
short, precious time remaining with
mother dear an eternity--for her!

BITER

Yeah!

LAFF

Woo-woo-woo-woo-woo-woo!

25

The demons move menacingly toward Doom's bound, gagged, and helpless mother. They cackle evilly as they threaten her.

Doom furious beyond imagining, but utterly helpless, can only turn away. He is the picture of tragic pain and frustration.

DOCTOR DOOM

I swear...unless Spider-Man brings
Maestra back...unless my mother is
freed...all humanity will pay! First,

I will destroy this city and everyone
in it! And then, I shall make this
whole world suffer and grieve as I
have grieved. So vows Doom.

Doom broods and seethes. The demons laugh.

Meanwhile, outside, Strange, Power Man, Iron Fist, the Hulk, and Niff are arriving at the
Latverian Embassy. Spotlights pick them up. Strange signals them to halt.

DOCTOR STRANGE

(Stage whisper) Wait here. I'll go
in alone and try to reason with Doom.

POWER MAN

(Stage whisper) Put your foot on his
throat first.

DOCTOR STRANGE

(Stage whisper) I saw Iron Man, Storm
and Wolverine fall prey to Doom's booby
traps--so I know how to avoid them.
It'll be safest if I go in first. But,
be ready if I need you.

IRON FIST

Count on us, Doctor Strange.

26

Strange enters the main door. In the hall, where Iron Man, Storm, and Wolverine were captured,
he edges along the wall, ducks electric eyes, and steps on certain tiles, avoiding traps. Reaching
the next door (to Doom's lab) he is about to grasp the door handle when Spider-Man's
disembodied voice issues a warning that stops him short.

SPIDER MAN'S VOICE

Don't touch that!

DOCTOR STRANGE

Spider-Man?

The big screens light up and we see the same type of effect as was used for Doctor Strange's astral form.

SPIDER-MAN

It's me, Doc. I'm here, with you...
sort of floating above you. I feel
very strange--I mean weird. And
everything looks weird.

DOCTOR STRANGE

You're in your astral form. When
Maestra shattered your body, her
spell also freed your astral form.
An astral form is...well, it's a
manifestation of your consciousness.

SPIDER-MAN

You mean I'm a ghost?

DOCTOR STRANGE

No, of course not. It may seem that
way--but you're still alive, my friend.

27

SPIDER-MAN

Good. I know this much--my Spider-
Sense still works. As you reached
for that doorknob it tingled like
crazy--that means danger.

Strange reaches toward a small latch about eye level on the door.

DOCTOR STRANGE

So...the doorknob must be booby
trapped. How about this small latch?

SPIDER-MAN

No tingle. Must be safe.

Strange turns the latch. The door opens a crack, with no traps sprung.

DOCTOR STRANGE

Thanks, my friend.

SPIDER-MAN

Doc? When this is all over, do you think you'll be able to put me back together?

DOCTOR STRANGE

I--I'll try Spider-Man.

Spider-Man's astral form effect fades. Strange enters Doom's lab. Doom is facing the other way still brooding, waiting. Without looking, he speaks.

DOCTOR DOOM

Come in, Doctor Strange.

DOCTOR STRANGE

Very astute, Doom.

28

Doom turns to face Strange.

DOCTOR DOOM

Surely you realize that there are no secrets from Doom in his own house.

Strange sees the portal, the demons and Doom's mother. The sight of the gaping portal, with but one mystic candle barring the way between dimensions chills him.

DOCTOR STRANGE

Doom, listen to me. Your mother must be freed--but not at the cost of another's life. Reseal the portal. Forget this mad scheme. Find some other way to rescue your mother. I'll help you if I can.

DOCTOR DOOM

There is no "other way". I have been waiting thirteen years for this night--waiting for the planets to move into perfect alignment...waiting for the interdimensional matrices to intersect...building this equipment...preparing... This is the night. This is my chance. My only chance.

DOCTOR STRANGE

Doom...I have powerful friends waiting outside. If necessary we will force you to close the portal.

Doom turns his back on Strange, walks to a table and fills a goblet with wine, unconcerned by Strange's threat. We see figures moving through the dark toward Power Man, Iron Fist, the Hulk and Niff. They are the Vermin Squad--Flea, Slug, and Tsetse, but we don't see them clearly yet.

29

DOCTOR DOOM

I, too, have "powerful friends..."

Suddenly, lights illuminate the Vermin Squad, and they attack Power Man, Iron Fist, and the Hulk.

Slug is a big, slow-moving strongman whose skin is blubbery and slimy. You can't grab him--he'll slip right through your hands. Hitting him is like punching a hefty bag half-full of jello. Iron Fist faces off against Slug, pounding away on him ineffectively.

Flea is a small, incredibly agile, leaping, whirling dervish. He has a mechanism on his head with antennae to help him sense prey, and a small blast-ray, mounted like the light on a miner's hat. This is his "bite". Power Man tries in vain to catch Flea and gets zapped repeatedly for his trouble.

Tsetse is a tall, thin, insectoid-looking figure. He has wings and is covered with hairlike protuberances like a fly. He has big fly-type eyes that glow--and their glow puts victims to sleep. The Hulk smashes cars, buildings and even the street itself trying to smash Tsetse.

Niff hides.

Note: As with all "fights" in this show, there should be much movement, acrobatics, spectacular special effects and many near misses, but no "real" violence. No one should be punched (and hit) except characters who are impervious to harm.

At the sound of the commotion, Strange rushes to a window and watches the battle--shocked and dismayed. His troops are losing.

Doom, meanwhile, relaxes and sips his wine. He calmly explains to Strange (and us) who these warriors of his are.

30

DOCTOR DOOM

I call them the Vermin Squad. I'm rather proud of them. I made them myself. The big one is named Slug. He's a walking mountain of muscle with a thick, blubbery, slippery hide. That spongy, slimy skin is better than armor. Iron Fist might as well be punching a greased plastic bag full of jelly. He can't hurt Slug--but Slug can hurt him.

At that moment, Slug uses his enormous strength and bulk to push a wall over, which Iron Fist narrowly evades being crushed by.

DOCTOR DOOM

The small one who's running rings around Power Man is Flea. The blast-ray built into his headgear--his "bite", I call it--will eventually batter down Power Man, despite his strength and steel-hard skin.

DOCTOR STRANGE

Don't count on it, Doom. The Hulk will help Power Man and Iron Fist in a minute. He has your third Vermin warrior on the run.

DOCTOR DOOM

Ah, that would be Tsetse--named after the fly that carries sleeping sickness. He's merely setting the Hulk up--

31

At this point, Tsetse has allowed the Hulk to get very close. As the Hulk rears back to smash him, Tsetse turns and gives the Hulk a strong dose of rays from his eyes, accompanied by a light and sound effect.

DOCTOR DOOM

--so he can give him a concentrated dose of the sleep-inducing rays from his eyes.

The Hulk wavers...

DOCTOR DOOM

The Hulk should collapse into a coma...right about...

The Hulk falls with a ground shaking thud. Meanwhile, Slug has Iron Fist helplessly pinned under a huge, blubbery foot, and Flea's "bites" have finally brought Power Man to his knees.

DOCTOR DOOM

...now. And now, Strange, my Vermin
Squad will destroy your "powerful
friends..."

Doom puts down the goblet and menacingly faces Strange.

DOCTOR DOOM

...and I shall destroy you!

Strange looks out the window--then suddenly whirls and blasts Doom with a brilliant beam from the amulet. Blinded, Doom staggers back a step.

DOCTOR DOOM

Arrhh!

32

Doom struggles to clear his eyes. He is otherwise unharmed.

DOCTOR DOOM

Curse that wretched amulet of yours!
When my eyes clear, you shall pay
for this--!

Strange, meanwhile, has turned to face out the window again. He makes mystic gestures and chants:

DOCTOR STRANGE

Vapors of Valtorr!
At my command appear!
Bring to our foes confusion,
And in their hearts strike fear!

Thick clouds of smoke fill the area where Power Man, Iron Fist and the Hulk battled the Vermin Squad. As the smoke rises, we see Slug becoming confused and afraid, allowing Iron Fist to wriggle free. Flea, likewise, lets Power Man limp away. Tsetse staggers around in confused

panic. The Hulk is completely obscured by smoke. He will exit to under Doom's auxiliary lab, and be replaced by Bruce Banner, who, like the Hulk was, is asleep for now. Iron Fist and Power Man find Banner in the smoke and carry him. Niff pops out of hiding, and, being a tracking imp, is able to lead the group to the back door that leads to Doom's auxiliary lab. Meanwhile, Strange enters the auxiliary lab and bolts the door to the main lab--just as Doom's eyes clear. Doom fires a blast from his built-in hand blaster that makes a small explosion on the door, just as Strange closes it. Doom's doors are very tough. Strange lets Niff, Power Man and Iron Fist, who are still carrying the unconscious Banner, into the lab. Doom hammers on the interior lab door. Outside, the smoke is slowly clearing and the Vermin Squad members are slowly getting a grip on themselves.

33

NIFF

Thanks, Doc 'Trange! Whew! We're 'afe...for a few 'econds, anyway.

DOCTOR STRANGE

(Glancing at the door where Doom pounds) Seconds is right. We need a plan...

IRON FIST

Hey! The Hulk turned back into Bruce Banner!

DOCTOR STRANGE

Of course! Tsetse made him sleep.

POWER MAN

I thought he was awful light for the Hulk!

Banner wakes up. Meanwhile, the Vermin Squad is regrouping. Doom quits pounding and ponders his next move.

BRUCE BANNER

Where am I?

POWER MAN

You are in deep trouble, m'man!

DOCTOR STRANGE

We're in Doctor Doom's lab.

Doom hammers on the door one last time.

DOCTOR STRANGE

That's Doom. He wants to kill us.

The Vermin Squad begin pounding on the outside door.

34

DOCTOR STRANGE

That must be the Vermin Squad. They
want to kill us, too.

The Vermin Squad keeps pounding, but Doom goes to his control board and begins setting dials and throwing switches. The audience doesn't know it yet, but he's initiating the procedure that activates Ultron.

BRUCE BANNER

Who...or what is the Vermin Squad?

DOCTOR DOOM

Custom-mutated warriors created by
Doom.

POWER MAN

Doom does good mutatin'. I hate to
say it, without the power of the Hulk
on our side, we don't stand a chance
against those guys.

Banner is looking around, getting his bearings, thinking.

BRUCE BANNER

I may not have the Hulk's power, but
I am a scientist...maybe I can help.

IRON FIST

How?

BRUCE BANNER

Hmm. (Examining the transformation
device) This must be the device Doom
used to create the Vermin Squad. I
think I could use it to create a
super-powered ally for us. If I had
a subject...

35

DOCTOR STRANGE

A subject?

BRUCE BANNER

Someone who has the genetic potential
for great power. Someone who is
worthy of great power...and someone
willing to take the risk. Undergoing
mutation...is dangerous.

The Vermin Squad is still pounding on the door. It's weakening. Power Man puts his shoulder to the door to brace it. Iron Fist helps.

DOCTOR STRANGE

If we knew of such a man...I could
teleport him here!

BRUCE BANNER

Maybe this computer can help us!

He switches on the computer.

BRUCE BANNER

Hello, computer.

COMPUTER

You aren't Doctor Doom.

BRUCE BANNER

No...we're friends of his.

COMPUTER

Nonsense. Doctor Doom has no friends.

I am going to alert him that an intruder
is tampering with me. He will override.

36

DOCTOR STRANGE

Wait! Don't. Ah...it isn't necessary.
Surely you realize that there are no
secrets from Doom in his own house.

COMPUTER

That is true. Therefore, he must
be aware of your use of me.

BRUCE BANNER

(Catching Strange's drift) Uh...
right. And since he hasn't stopped
us, it must be all right with him,
right?

COMPUTER

What can I do for you?

BRUCE BANNER

Please choose a brave, good, noble
person, willing to risk his life to
help others, who's genetically

suitable for transformation.

The computer clicks and whirrs.

COMPUTER

Done. Here is his name and location.

A card comes out of the computer.

BRUCE BANNER

Thank you. Thank you very much.

Strange takes the card and concentrates, making mystic gestures as he reads the name.

37

DOCTOR STRANGE

Howard Carson--!

In the audience, a black man rises. Unlike the sleepwalkers before, he is awake and aware. Spotlights find him and attention focuses on him.

HOWARD CARSON

Who's calling me?

DOCTOR STRANGE

I am Doctor Strange. Open your mind to me, Howard Carson, and let the mystic power of my amulet reach into your mind and make known to you our predicament and our need.

There is a sound effect, and light effects from Strange's amulet.

HOWARD CARSON

I...understand. I'll do it.

Carson walks down the aisle and into the performance area, onto a stage at the edge of the show floor. Banner works feverishly, preparing the transformation device. Meanwhile, Doom's preparations, with lights flashing and power humming, are intensifying. The Vermin Squad, after a brief rest, have renewed their assault on the door, which buckles.

Niff, too, joins Power Man and Iron Fist bracing the door. Carson stands, ready, to be teleported.

HOWARD CARSON

I'm ready, Doctor Strange!

BRUCE BANNER

Put him right into this tube,
Strange. There's not a moment to
waste!

38

Strange makes his teleportation gesture, and with the usual smoke and effects, Carson vanishes and simultaneously appears in the tube. (A dummy of him, anyway. Carson will travel below stage, change to Pulsar, a super-hero, and replace the dummy in the tube before Pulsar is due to appear). Banner immediately throws a large switch and the transformation begins, the tube clouding over with energy, as before. Outside, Doom notices a power drain--and that the computer is on.

DOCTOR DOOM

Computer! What are you doing on?
What is happening in there?

COMPUTER

You know. Your friends are making a
new super-hero. I helped. They are
very polite.

Doom slams an armored fist down on the console, badly smashing it. Sparks fly. The computer sounds injured, sputtering, hissing and skipping.

DOCTOR DOOM

Idiot!

COMPUTER

Ouch. S-sorry...

Doom works even more urgently. Ultron rises in his capsule. Ominous lights flicker and power crackles. Inside the auxiliary lab, the door the Vermin Squad are hammering on is giving.

POWER MAN

Strange! Banner! They're breakin' in!

Banner works the transformation machine controls frantically.

39

BRUCE BANNER

Hold them! I need time--!

With a thunderous crash, the Vermin Squad bursts in. Power Man, Niff, and Iron Fist go tumbling backward. Strange tries to make a mystic defense gesture, but Flea zaps and stuns him. Slug crushes Power Man up against some equipment. Tsetse leaps onto Iron Fist, trying to get a clear shot at his eyes. Iron Fist covers his eyes with one hand, but then can't see to fight Tsetse, and is losing. This time Niff tries to help, but Tsetse gives him a blast that puts him to sleep. Flea, having taken Strange out of the fight, goes after Banner. He zaps Banner again and again until Banner tumbles, in agony, into a boiling vat of chemicals. All seems lost.

Then Howard Carson bursts (smashes) out of the transformation tube--but he is now far more than human. He is Pulsar. As will be shown in the following sequence, Pulsar is super-strong, near-invulnerable, and can emit searing stellar energy.

Flea zaps Pulsar--who is unharmed. Pulsar points and a pulsating blast of stellar energy flies from his hand, narrowly missing Flea and utterly destroying a piece of equipment with a spectacular blast.

That gets the attention of Slug and Tsetse. They leave Power Man and Iron Fist, who recover slowly, to face off, with Flea, against this new hero.

SLUG

Who are you?

Pulsar speaks almost to himself, virtually ignoring the Vermin Squad.

40

PULSAR

I'm--I'm not just Howard Carson any-
more, that's for sure. I feel like
the energy of a star is surging
through me in waves!

Pulsar starts to glow in pulsating, rhythmic flashes. He looks ominous, dangerous, powerful. The lights dim to accentuate the light his power generates. The Vermin Squad are a bit awed. He is still wrapped up in himself and his new power. He hardly notices the Vermin Squad.

PULSAR

I am...Pulsar. Yes. Pulsar!

The Vermin Squad, overcoming their fear, charge Pulsar.

FLEA

You're dead, jerk.

Pulsar turns, emits a burst of light like a flashbulb, blinding the Vermin Squad, then flies into the air above them. Meanwhile, Power Man and Iron Fist have gotten back onto their feet. Strange is still down, still groggy, and Niff is peacefully snoozing.

Iron Fist charges Flea, dodges a few "bites" and in a series of spectacular kung-fu moves, overpowers him, and, ultimately puts him to sleep with a nerve pinch.

Power Man charges Tsetse, and barrels into him shoulder first, knocking him for a loop. Then, careful not to look right at Tsetse, he picks up a steel container (approximately the size of a garbage can) and jams it down over Tsetse's head. He crimps the can tightly around Tsetse with his bare hands, sealing him inside.

41

Pulsar lands in front of Slug. Slug rips a huge metal bar or pipe off of a piece of equipment and whirls, slamming it down on Pulsar. The bar bends on Pulsar's near-invulnerable body, but staggers him, knocking him back a step. Slug presses his advantage, swinging again--but Pulsar catches the bar--and heats it white hot with a burst of pulsating star energy. Slug howls and releases the bar, his hands steaming. Pulsar rips a huge slab from its mounts on a machine (ala Frankenstein's slab) and slams Slug over the head with it. Slug's head breaks through the slab, proving that that blow didn't slide off (the slab being too big). Slug is knocked down and dazed. Doom does a take when he hears the crash--but keeps working, preparing Ultron.

By this time Doctor Strange has recovered, and is waking Niff up. Power Man, Pulsar, and Iron Fist dump the helpless Vermin Squad members down a chute marked "garbage," presumably to the basement. Pulsar is incredibly excited about his debut.

PULSAR

Did you see me! I can fly!

IRON FIST

You were great, Pulsar!

PULSAR

This is terrific! Did you see me rip that slab off its mounts? And those star-powered energy blasts?

POWER MAN

Rookies. Huh.

Just as Strange revives Niff, the Hulk jumps up out of the vat Banner fell into. Again, he's furious. Niff, barely awake, comes wide awake with a start and shrieks when the Hulk bursts out of the vat. Niff clings to Strange.

42

IRON FIST

The Hulk! Banner must have changed back.

DOCTOR STRANGE

I never thought the day would come when
I'd be glad to see that happen.

Strange leads the group through the interior door into the main lab. Niff is last, carrying Spider-Man's remains.

DOCTOR STRANGE

Come.

The heroes face off against Doom, who looks calm, unworried.

DOCTOR STRANGE

Doom. It is time to end your mad
scheme. Close the portal. Now.

DOCTOR DOOM

You and your misbegotten minions have
but one chance to survive, Strange.
Go and seek the Maestra. Find her,
bring her to me, and I will spare you.

POWER MAN

Why don't you face facts, bucket-head.
It's over. Now, you gonna close that
portal, or...

Doom sighs. Patiently, patronizingly he explains.

DOCTOR DOOM

Once I close the portal, all hope of
freeing my mother is gone. Therefore,
I shall keep it open until the last
possible instant--until one second
before the candle burns itself out at
dawn...

DOCTOR STRANGE

That's only minutes from now, Doom.

DOCTOR DOOM

Precisely. Now, are you going to find the Maestra, or should I have you killed where you stand?

Pulsar, very sure of himself, breaks ranks and strides toward Doom.

PULSAR

Why are we wasting time talking?

Pulsar grabs Doom. Doom pushes a button.

DOCTOR DOOM

Unhand me, fool.

Ultron's capsule opens. He strides out menacingly. Pulsar doesn't see him, but the others do.

PULSAR

Who's going to make me?

IRON FIST

Pulsar! Look out!

Ultron blasts Pulsar with his incredibly powerful Neutralizer Beam (which should have a spectacular special effect). Pulsar goes down hard, unconscious.

DOCTOR DOOM

Ultron will "make you", idiot.
Ultron--the most powerful, invulnerable robotic warrior ever created!

POWER MAN

Rookies! Huh!

Power Man, Iron Fist and the Hulk charge Ultron. With a single sweep of his Neutralizer Beam Ultron fells them as easily as he did Pulsar. Ultron then turns on Strange. Strange backs away a few steps, in the direction of the auxiliary lab. Niff, behind him, in lockstep also backs up. Just as Ultron is about to blast Strange, the Hulk, who, being strongest, is not quite unconscious, reaches up and slams Ultron with a massive fist, jarring him enough to spoil his aim. The shot narrowly misses Strange and Niff. Under cover of the smoke and flash caused by the near-miss, Strange and Niff duck around the corner into the auxiliary lab and close the huge door. Meanwhile, the Hulk grapples with Ultron. It's a close fight--but the edge goes to Ultron, whose robotic strength nearly matches the Hulk's, and whose adamantium-metal body cannot be harmed. In the Auxiliary lab, Strange desperately tries to think of a plan.

DOCTOR STRANGE

If only Spider-Man were here--!

Niff, being helpful, hands Strange the bag.

NIFF

Here he is, Doc 'Trange! Why don't
you try to put him back together?
It might work. 'Tranger...er, odder
things have happened.

Strange thinks a moment, then begins making mystic gestures over the bag, and chanting. There are light and sound effects.

45

DOCTOR STRANGE

A man divided cannot stand,
shattered by a witch's hand.
A body broken by force or spell,
Is a place unfit for spirit to dwell.
By the power of Hoggoth, and Raggador's Rings,
By the eternal Vishanti, and the Seven Kings,
Restore this warrior--Leviathan's bane!
Make Spider-Man whole again!

Nothing happens. Strange shakes his head and slumps.

DOCTOR STRANGE

It's no use! I still don't have
enough power.

NIFF

Can I help?

DOCTOR STRANGE

No. It would take thousands of strong-
willed minds working together.

The computer, though damaged, is still on. As it speaks, it sputters, clicks, and skips like Max Headroom.

COMPUTER

I c-could help.

Strange is taken a bit by surprise. He eyes the computer warily.

DOCTOR STRANGE

You...?

COMPUTER

I could help. But I won't. Because
you lied to me. You aren't really
friends of Doctor Doom.

46

DOCTOR STRANGE

True. He is no friend of mine. Or
yours, apparently. Exactly...how
could you help?

COMPUTER

I am equipped for psycho-scanning.
I could find the thousands of strong-
willed minds you need...harness their

power...and channel it into your mind.

DOCTOR STRANGE

Doom hurt you, computer. He means to hurt many people and many things. Help me stop him. Please!

There is a pause of several seconds during which the computer clicks, whirrs, and ponders. As the computer speaks again the overhead screens light up with a graphic power gauge--which shows a high level of psychic energy pouring in. At the same time, weird lights play across the audience.

COMPUTER

There are ten thousand (or house count) minds in this vicinity that are willing and strong. I have established mental contact. My graphic readout shows the power level. Proceed, Doctor Strange.

COMPUTER

I am beaming the collective mental energies of every mind present in this vicinity directly into your mind, Doctor Strange.

Strange concentrates and gestures. No results.

47

DOCTOR STRANGE

Still not enough power. Computer! Please ask the people to chant the mystic phrase "Natsan Devets". It will help them focus their will-power!

COMPUTER

All present please repeat with me:

Natsan Devets...Natsan Devets...

Natsan Devets (etc.)

The audience chants. The power gauge shows increasing power. It steadily climbs. Niff joins in with the computer chanting and, moving his arms like a conductor or a cheerleader, eggs the audience on. Strange concentrates. In the other room the Hulk is losing, and about to fall to Ultron.

The gauge shows an enormous level of power. The computer shudders and smokes. With a final, incredible effort, Strange dramatically gestures at the scarifying balls, and suddenly, in a burst of light and smoke, Spider-Man is recreated!

In the other room the Hulk falls.

Doctor Strange is exhausted, on the verge of collapse.

DOCTOR STRANGE

Spider-Man...you've got to...

Spider-Man is already unbolting the door to the main lab.

SPIDER-MAN

No need to draw me a diagram, Doc.

I've been watching, remember?

Spider-Man bounds into the main lab and attacks Ultron, just in time to prevent him from killing the Hulk.

48

DOCTOR DOOM

Spider-Man!

SPIDER-MAN

In the flesh! At last!

Spider-Man uses his incredible agility to evade Ultron's might arms and deadly Neutralizer Beam. In the precious seconds Ultron is occupied chasing Spider-Man, the Hulk rises. Doom shouts a warning to Ultron.

DOCTOR DOOM

Ultron! Behind you!

Ultron whirls to face the Hulk, just in time for the angry Hulk to grab him in a mighty bear hug. Ultron's arms are pinned. That gives Spider-Man a chance to open up a panel on the robot's back and rip out a bunch of wires, disabling him. His wires torn, Ultron freezes. But the Hulk's rage is not yet spent. He hammers Ultron into the stone floor like a big adamantium nail -- until only his head is sticking out. Then the Hulk kicks Ultron's head like a football sending it bouncing across the arena. (Presumably the actor has gotten his head out first).

The Hulk, Spider-Man, Strange and Niff face off against Doom. Meanwhile, Power Man, Iron Fist and Pulsar slowly recover and join the other heroes.

DOCTOR STRANGE

Now, Doom. Close the portal.

Doom lunges for and reaches the lever that triggers the Doomsday Device.

DOCTOR DOOM

I will not abandon my mother while
a breath of hope remains. Get out
of my laboratory -- or I shall
disintegrate your city to dust!

49

Behind Doom, inside the portal, the Demons lick their chops. Dormammu himself approaches the portal again. The candle is burning low -- it's almost out. The heroes waver, undecided whether to rush Doom or not. Doom's hand trembles on the lever. The city, the world teeters on the brink of oblivion.

Suddenly, from the back of the auditorium, the Maestra's voice rings out.

MAESTRA

Stop!

Spotlights illuminate her. She levitates all the way to the lab. (Or as far as possible, say from the edge of the performance area to the lab).

SPIDER-MAN

Maestra! What are you doing...here?

MAESTRA

I thought about what you said, Spider-Man, about trying to save others if you had the power. And I thought about how brave you were, fighting Leviathan--so that someone you don't even know might be free to live again on Earth.

I'm not as brave as you...but I can't let everyone in this city die because of me. (To Doom) And you really would destroy millions out of spite... as revenge for your own grief. (She looks sad, disappointed in him).

Maestra offers herself to Doom.

MAESTRA

Go ahead, Doom. Make the exchange. I'll take your mother's place in the Dark Dimension.

50

Doom seizes her, and is about to cast her in.

DOCTOR DOOM

Dormammu! The witch is yours.
Release my mother...and take her!

Spider-Man, in total anguish, takes a step toward Doom, pleading.

SPIDER-MAN

No! Doom--! Your mother doesn't want her freedom this way! She'll hate you for this!

That gives Doom a second's pause, but he persists.

SPIDER-MAN

Look at her, Doom! Look at your
mother! If she could speak, she'd
beg you not to condemn Maestra to
save her.

Doom hesitates again. Although she is bound and gagged, Doom's mother's anguish is clear.
Spider-Man is obviously right. Doom hesitates.

Suddenly, shafts of rosy light peek into the lab. Dawn is breaking. The candle sputters and dies!
Doom's mother vanishes. The portal flashes light and hideous color. There is a noise like
thunder...and the Demons burst through the portal and into the lab (i.e. right through the screens).

The heroes fall back a bit, bracing themselves. The Demons look evil, menacing.

SCRATCHER

You blew it, Doom!

51

BITER

Your mother has already been hurled
back to the pit!

LAFF

And we're free to tear this place
apart--!

SCRATCHER

Starting with you! But first, why
don't you help us welcome -- or else
-- that Supreme Overlord of Demons,
soon-to-be ruler of the charred
wasteland this whole planet is sure
to become.

BITER

Appearing live, on Earth for the
very first time--!

LAFF

Like us! Nyuk!

SCRATCHER

His Spitefulness, the Lord of pain
--let's have a big hand for...

ALL THREE DEMONS

The Dread Dormammu!

The Demons applaud as Dormammu steps through the wide open portal. The heroes and Maestra watch in horror. Doom is lost in his own anguish and agony, and has been since his mother vanished.

DORMAMMU

First...we kill all these.

52

The Demons and Dormammu surge toward the heroes. The Demons, and especially Dormammu, are incredibly powerful. They fight with flames, claws, magic and incredible strength. The heroes are pushed back.

Suddenly, a huge, heavy stone door in the lab floor swings open, and up from the dungeon where they were trapped come Iron Man, Storm, and Wolverine. They join in the battle on the side of the heroes! Even Doom joins in. Though it is not the longest, this should be the most spectacular battle of the show.

DOCTOR STRANGE

Iron Man! Wolverine! Storm! Who
freed you from Doom's dungeon?

WOLVERINE

Nobody. Thanks a lot.

STORM

We broke out. I picked the locks!

IRON MAN

You can't keep a good hero -- or
heroine -- trapped for long.

Together, the heroes and Doom force the Demons and, finally, Dormammu back through the portal.

DOCTOR STRANGE

Doom! Seal the portal! Hurry!

Doom operates the same controls with which he opened the portal spectacularly in act one. Just as spectacularly, he closes it. The tattered remains of the portal sink down into the lab floor and are covered over, as before the portal was opened. As he closes the portal, some city lights wink back on. The blackout is over.

53

DOCTOR STRANGE

Maestra! We must seal it double
strong! Help me!

Strange and Maestra aim mystic gestures at the portal-site.

DOCTOR STRANGE and MAESTRA

Powers of light, by Hoggoth's helm,
Seal Dormammu in his dismal realm.
Against forces strong or wizards clever,
Bar the demon's gate...forever!

SPIDER-MAN

So that's it, huh? The passage between
dimensions is completely blocked...?

DOCTOR STRANGE

Not...quite. No spell can prevent Dormammu from dragging in those foolish enough to make a pact with him. But...no one already inside the Dark Dimension--including Dormammu --can ever get out. No one. I'm...sorry.
Doom.

Hearing Strange's words, Doom is visibly thunderstruck, as if stabbed by a red-hot knife. Though Doom is in agony, otherwise, it is calm.

SPIDER-MAN

Guess it's over.

54

DOCTOR STRANGE

Almost. I'll have to speak to Mister Fantastic of the Fantastic Four, when he returns from the moon, about restoring the Vermin Squad to their normal, human selves.

POWER MAN

It ain't anywhere near over. Not until I do some settling up with bucket-head, there, for startin' this whole thing.

WOLVERINE

You an' me both.

HULK

Rarrh!

Power Man, Wolverine and the Hulk start toward Doom menacingly. Doom pulls himself together and faces them imperiously.

DOCTOR DOOM

I remind you that you are in the
Latverian Embassy. This is sovereign
Latverian territory. I am king, here.
And I order you to leave. At once.

Spider-Man heads off Power Man, Wolverine and the Hulk.

SPIDER-MAN

He's right. I learned all about that
sovereign stuff in World Cultures Class.
Let's just call it a night and split, huh?

The heroes, some muttering all exit the Embassy. Maestra stays.

DOCTOR STRANGE

Come on, Niff. Before I send you
home, I'll buy you an Egg McMuffin,
as a little thank-you for your help.

NIFF

Oh, boy! That's 'pectacular! Thanks,
Doc 'Trange.

55

SCENE 4

Spider-Man, exhausted, rests for minute outside the Embassy as all the rest exit the performance area. It is dawn, the lights are up halfway on the city. In the lab, still fully lit, Maestra faces Doom. Maestra is sincere, but cold, Doom is imperious and disdainful, but dying inside.

MAESTRA

Doom...I feel terrible about your
mother...but with all due respect to
her, I feel that the greatest thing
that was lost last night...was what

might have been between you and me.

Doom tries to show no emotion, and in doing so, speaks volumes.

MAESTRA

Farewell, Victor Von Doom. Forever.

Maestra leaves. Once she is gone, Doom looks shattered. He slumps into a chair -- near the Doomsday Device Lever.

Outside, Maestra sees Spider-Man. It is light outside by now, and dark in the lab, by comparison.

MAESTRA

Spider-Man!

SPIDER-MAN

Hi, lady. How's tricks? Or shouldn't you ask that of a sorceress?

Maestra takes Spider-Man's hand.

56

MAESTRA

You have taught me a great deal, Spider-Man. Thanks to you, I think I'm going to be a better sorceress. Not more powerful, just better. I'm going to try to be as good and brave and caring as you. Thank you.

Maestra pulls up Spider-Man's mask and kisses him. Just as that happens, Mary Jane approaches. She sees the kiss.

MAESTRA

Good-bye, Spider-Man. I hope we

meet again.

SPIDER-MAN

Me, too!

Maestra levitates away.

MARY JANE

Is that so?

Spider-Man whirls at the sound of Mary Jane's voice to see her approaching from behind him.

SPIDER-MAN

Mary Jane!

MARY JANE

So, is she why you were out all night?

Spider-Man takes Mary Jane in his arms, though she's a bit reluctant.

57

SPIDER-MAN

No. Now, look, MJ -- I lost a million bucks last night. I almost lost my life...and everyone else's in the whole world. No way I'm losing you.

Spider-Man kisses Mary Jane. They walk off arm in arm.

MARY JANE

No million dollars, huh?

SPIDER-MAN

Nah. It, uh...just didn't work out. But, it's just as well, 'cause I decided last night that I want to visit Aunt May a lot

more often from now on!

MARY JANE

Okay, but why?

SPIDER-MAN

Because there's nothing as terrible
as missing a loved one.

Spider-Man and Mary Jane stroll home and exit the performance area. A spotlight focuses on Doom, still brooding in his lab.

DOCTOR DOOM

They thought my oath to destroy the
city was an idle bluff. They left,
never believing for an instant that
Doom would make good his threat...

Doom starts his speech as a depressed, quiet, musing, but begins to gather steam and self-righteous fury.

58

DOCTOR DOOM

...but if I am forced to grieve, then
the world shall grieve as well. Spider-
Man, the Maestra, Strange -- all who
helped to thwart me will pay! I shall
destroy this city in a searing, sub-
neutronic fireball...

Doom clenches the Doomsday Lever in his hand, about to yank it.

DOCTOR DOOM

Now!

Suddenly, just as Doom says "now," a huge claw or tentacle (same as in Doom's memory sequence, when Dormammu grabbed his mother) bursts out of Dormammu's realm through the portal, and drags Doom screaming into the Dark Dimension. Then the portal seals again.

An echo of Doom's words from before reverberates through the arena:

DOOM'S VOICE

"I swear to you, Dormammu, come morning
my mother and I shall be together again."

Dormammu's laughter echoes. Music rises. The finale begins.

DORMAMMU'S VOICE

"I shall remember those brave, foolish
words, mortal. (He laughs).

END