No Heroics.

pilot episode:

"The Birthday Party"

written by Drew Pearce and Jeff Greenstein
ACT ONE

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - EVENING

Four friends in everyday clothes walk along a street in the Lower East Side: Pete (handsome, lovable loser), Callie (feisty, lead-singer-cool), Nigel (dry, British), and Sandy (quirky, a bit heavy). We drop in on their conversation:

PETE
...So, you still okay to drive me to my gig tonight?

CALLIE
Stop calling it a "gig." It's a small girl's birthday party.

NIGEL
Brrr, I hate children. The teeth, the noises, their tiny hard little feet...

SANDY
I think you're mixing up children and goats.

PETE
Hey, it's not like I enjoy whoring myself out to eight-year-olds. But it costs a fortune these days just to stay in the game. The costumes, the agent fees, the gym membership...

SANDY
Not to mention the medical bills every time some Russian megalomaniac in a robot suit smashes you against a building.

CALLIE
God, that's the worst.

PETE
Tell me about it.

NIGEL
Sometimes being a superhero is a right pain in the arse.

MAIN TITLE:


CAPTION: With one small difference. A pair of superheroes, middle distance, fly through frame.
CAPTION: There are superheroes. We TILT DOWN to the sidewalk, where costumed heroes blend in with the unfazed crowd. One is lined up at the ATM. Another crushes garbage and throws it into a dumptruck. A homeless hero fires up his hand pathetically near a crude sign which reads "Will flame on for cash."

CHILLOUT - freeze powers. Pete is in his apartment, apparently on a date, holding a margarita glass in each hand. He concentrates -- his hands are suffused with a BLUE GLOW -- the glasses FREEZE... and he passes one to his date: a teddy bear wearing a small "Chillout" T-shirt.

CROSSFADE - short-term invisibility. Callie approaches a pair of rest room doors. There's a long line outside the ladies' and none at all at the men's. She surveys the scene for a beat -- then promptly TURNS INVISIBLE and strolls into the men's room. The door slams.

BRAINSTORM - reads minds* within three meters. Nigel is in a backroom poker game. He cocks his head and -- WHOOSH -- reads his opponent's thoughts. Then tosses in his hand and leaves the table. His opponent lays down a full house.

SLAMAZON - superstrength. Sandy is at dinner, laughing too hard at one of her date's jokes. She accidentally flicks a pea off her plate. It hits the guy in the forehead LIKE A BULLET and THROWS HIM BACK out of his chair. On his pitiful O.S. sobs...

TITLE CARD: NO HEROICS.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - CONTINUING

Still walking along, the friends laugh at Sandy's story.

SANDY
Don't laugh. Do you know how it feels to make a man cry on the first date?

NIGEL

PETE
Gross.

SANDY
Men just can't handle a strong woman. That's why the only ones who ever hit on me are creepy submissives. I wish I could meet a nice guy...

CALLIE
There are no nice guys. That's why I date boys like Darkfist and Death (MORE)
CALLIE (CONT'D)
Rattle. He cheated? He didn't call? Surprise! He's a supervillain.

SANDY
I couldn't do that. Supervillains have terrible breath.

PETE
It's all that coffee they drink. Late nights, master plans...

They approach a dingy walkdown with a gate: "Manhattan Watchmenders." Nigel's pager BEEPS. He irritably turns it off.

NIGEL
Ugghhh. Stop stalking me.

CALLIE
Ex-boyfriend?

NIGEL
Police. They want help with some boring life-or-death hostage situation.

SANDY
Nigel, remember that talk we had about being a superhero? About powers, and responsibility?

NIGEL
Yeah, yeah, don't worry. I've got a plan.

SANDY
Great.

NIGEL
Ignore the hostage, buy some beer, get completely wankered.

Under a small neon sign, "The Watchtower," a door reads "NO MASKS, NO POWERS, NO HEROICS." Nigel knocks, and the peephole slides open to reveal the chubby face of doorman Horseforce.

HORSEFORCE
Password?
(noticing Sandy, bashful)
Oh, hey, Sandy.

PETE
Come on, you know us, Horseforce.

CALLIE
We all bullied you in college.
HORSEFORCE
Yes, yes, you did. But now I am the
gatekeeper of the city's only super-
secret superhero bar, so --

Nigel casually cocks his head and -- WHOOSH -- reads
Horseforce's thoughts.

NIGEL
The password's "Sugarlump."

HORSEFORCE
Dammit! No powers in the Watchtower!
Don't make me summon my stallions!

PETE
You wouldn't.

Horseforce BRAYS MADLY into the night for a really long time.
Sandy just looks at him, waiting for him to finish, then...

SANDY
How long's it take the stallions to
get here once you've summoned them?

HORSEFORCE
Two, two and a half hours. Depends on
the traffic. Not that my horses would
be a match for a big, strong girl like
you. I mean, look at those arms.
They're like hams!

SANDY
(aside to Callie)
See what I mean? Creepy.

They push past him and head inside. He calls after:

HORSEFORCE
Sexy hams! That's an expression, right?

INT. THE WATCHTOWER - MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They enter a bustling speakeasy. We catch glimpses of
superpowers -- a glowing finger, someone levitating.

CALLIE
Whose round is it?

NIGEL
Sorry. Only got British money.

SANDY
You've lived here fourteen years.
NIGEL
I've been busy.

He and Sandy head off to a table, leaving Callie with Pete.

PETE
Don't look at me.

CALLIE
Why would I? The last time you bought me a drink was in college, and that was only 'cause you were trying to make me too sleepy to fight you off.

PETE
Ah, our sweet time together. Our epic romance. Three weeks of chilled bliss you clearly haven't forgotten.

CALLIE
That's 'cause I still can't get the taste of your snowballs out of my mouth.

ANGLE ON the bar, where Bradley (a boorish alpha male) and his group of acolytes are watching, on the bar TV, the red-carpet arrivals at a glitzy gala.

TV REPORTER (ON TV)
...where tonight, the Mayor will honor our city's most dedicated servants -- the teachers, the firemen, the nurses...

BRADLEY
Blah blah blah. Get to the good bit!

TV REPORTER (ON TV)
...and of course, our favorite costumed hero -- the mighty Ultimatum.

A shot of Bradley in his ULTIMATUM costume. The acolytes cheer.

BRADLEY
Who's that handsome bastard? Oh, it's me!

He spots Pete and Callie approaching.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)
Hey, the B-list is in the house!
(holding up drink)
Plop some ice in this for me, willya, Chillpill?
PETE
My cape name, as you know, is Chillout.

BRADLEY
Your own mother doesn't know your cape name. Guess how I know that?

PETE
I think I can probably --

BRADLEY
I'm banging her.

The sycophants laugh hysterically at the lame joke.

CALLIE
Bradley, his mom's actually dead.

The sycophants stop, chastened. There's a pause, then:

BRADLEY
Dead tired from all the banging!

The sycophants laugh hysterically again. As Pete leans in to order drinks, Bradley focuses on Callie.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)
Interesting. Before, I only had you down as 80% do-able. But tonight, you're rocking an 85. Care to accompany me to this little shindig?

CALLIE
I'd rather eat a garbage bag full of cold puke.

PETE
FYI: that's a no.

They take their drinks and start off. Bradley calls after:

BRADLEY
Suit yourself. But you're turning down a one-time ticket to the biggest show in town.

(she keeps walking)

And by "the biggest show in town," I mean my penis!

They laugh hysterically again. Pete and Callie reach the table.

NIGEL
I'm not doing it.
SANDY
Come on. Just mind-read those guys at the bar and tell me if any of them are boyfriend material.

CALLIE
Oh, we're playing this game again?

PETE
Awesome. I liked when we found out Tinface was a Scientologist.

SANDY
Please, Nigel? Please?

NIGEL
Ugh. For god's sake, woman...
  (casually does a read; then)
Mummy's boy, Maroon 5 fan, closet shirt-lifter -- and stay away from the Arab fella, he's got a fantasy about making out with Princess Diana in a speeding Parisian limousine.

PETE
Hot.

The last man, BUTCH, is at the end of the bar, his back to them.

NIGEL
Oh, and the one with the shiny coat?
He's got --

SANDY
Actually, stop, leave a little mystery. Let me think there's still a chance I can find one nice, normal guy. Until then, I need the next best thing.

PETE
A male prostitute?

SANDY
A bowl of pretzels.

She exits. Pete goes for his beer and sees Callie's swiped it.

PETE
Hey, ease up. You're supposed to be driving me tonight.

CALLIE
Pete, I'm sitting down, I've got a beer... It's essentially impossible
(MORE)
CALLIE (CONT'D)
for me to leave at this point.
(tossing him cash)
Here, take a cab.

PETE
Yeah, see, that won't work. I kind of... implied you'd be there, too.

CALLIE
(with an edge)
Okaaay. How did you imply that, exactly?

Pete gingerly holds up the invitation, which shows Callie as a young, Disney-Club-esque 14-year-old superhero.

PETE
By putting your name in enormous spangly letters across the top of the invitation, then surrounding it with clip art?

CALLIE
"Former star of The PowerPixie Club"?!
I can't believe you! You know I hate being reminded of that!

PETE
Oh, boo hoo, Callie was a child star.

CALLIE
You weren't there. It was awful. Like Vietnam, but with dance routines.

NIGEL
That actually sounds quite fun.

PETE
They wanted a bigger name! Do you know how that feels? To want to be a world-famous superhero, then find out you're not big enough to headline an ice cream party in Fort Lee?

CALLIE
Oh, boo hoo, Pete's not living the dream.

PETE
Screw the dream, I need cash! We can't all be trust fund babies like you!

Callie stares at Pete, stung. Nigel makes an "ouch" face. Then she menacingly begins folding up the invitation.
CALLIE
"Trust fund baby," huh? I think you may have to hitch a ride with someone else tonight. I've got other plans.

She stalks off to the bar. Nigel's pager BEEPS. He checks it.

NIGEL
"Insane hostage-taker about to blow up half of midtown." Sod it, could be a laugh...

He gets up and grabs his coat. Callie stomps up to Bradley.

CALLIE
You're on for tonight. But not for the penis part. And if we don't leave this second, there's no way I'm still going to be angry enough to do this.

BRADLEY
Say no more. Hop on, arm-muffin.

As Callie takes his arm, she smiles acidly at Pete. Behind her, Bradley makes a lascivious hand gesture. Pete calls after her:

PETE
Callie! Come on! There's gonna be make-your-own mini-pizzas. Yum-yum!

But they're gone. Pete tentatively turns to Nigel.

PETE (CONT'D)
I don't suppose you'd...

NIGEL
Pete, given the choice between the smell of a roomful of eight-year-olds and the stench of my own bomb-scarred, melting flesh... Well, you can guess.

PETE
Wow. British people really hate children.
ACT TWO
EXT. SUBURBAN BACKYARD – LATER
A fairy-lit kids' party with a makeshift stage. Pete, now in full costume, is backstage with the birthday girl's dad. Pete peeks out at the crowd of expectant, sugar-high kids.

PETE
Are any of them biters? Because I've had trouble with biters before.

DAD
Not that I know of, Chillaxe.

PETE
Chillout. I mean, it's fine if there are. But maybe we could have a little muzzle standing by? A little makeshift muzzle, just in case?

DAD
Where's the invisible girl you promised?

PETE
What can I say? She disappeared!

Pete laughs uproariously at his joke. The dad does not.

PETE (CONT’D)
Yeah, she's not coming.

DAD
So what am I getting for my money? You gonna do some flying?

PETE
Well, no, flying's not really on the menu. But you can expect a cavalcade of frozen fun and sub-zero sensation!

DAD
You make crap out of ice?

PETE
I make crap out of ice.

DAD
Listen, don't mess up my baby girl's big day, okay? She's got it hard enough, being in a wheelchair.
PETE
Really? Oh, man, that's terrible.
(beat)
My three best disabled jokes just went right out the window.

INT. WATCHTOWER - BAR - SAME TIME

Sandy loads up on pretzels. Watching her, Horseforce ventures:

HORSEFORCE
Sandy, when I said "hams" before, about your arms... You have to understand: I love ham.

SANDY
(picking up bowl)
Save it, Horseforce.

She turns away -- and BUMPS right into BUTCH, the man with the shiny leather jacket, sending him flying spectacularly.

SANDY (CONT'D)
My pretzels! I mean, are you okay?

Butch hops back up with a smile, trying to play down the pain. Sandy's gaze meets his kind eyes. He has a Brad-Pitt-in-Thelma-and-Louise Texas accent.

BUTCH
Hardly felt a thing.

He painfully pops his shoulder back into place.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
All my fault for gettin' in your way, little lady.

SANDY
(melting)
Did you just call me "little"? 'Cause if you did, that's the nicest thing anyone's ever said to me.

BUTCH
Well, then you just ain't been hangin' 'round the right heroes. Name's Butch.

SANDY
I'm Sandy.

They shake hands for a lingering beat.
BUTCH
Nice to meet you, little lady.

SANDY
(girlish giggle)
You said it again.

Horseforce has observed all this. He is not pleased.

INT. LIMO – SAME TIME

Bradley reclines as Callie looks out the window.

BRADLEY
I know it's tacky, but I still think you should've let me fly us to the gala.

CALLIE
Thanks, but the last thing I need is someone trying to goose me at fifty thousand feet.

BRADLEY
Don't knock it 'til you've tried it.

CALLIE
(laughs, almost charmed)
You are an unbelievable douchebag.

BRADLEY
Oh, I know. Champagne?

CALLIE
Is there Rohypnol in it?

BRADLEY
Would you like there to be?

CALLIE
Bradley, you even think about cape-rape, and I'll disappear your testicles right up into your lungs.

BRADLEY
(beat)
Just so you know, you just went up to 90% do-able.

CALLIE
Ironic, really, because you just dropped to a ten. You're going down.
BRADLEY
I was thinking exactly the same thing.

EXT. "THE FLAP" FLAGSHIP STORE – SAME TIME

Cops and gawkers ring the entrance of a skyscraper whose upper floors are still under construction. As Nigel AKA Brainstorm approaches the police line, an officer roughly blocks his path.

COP
Stop right there. ID and cape name.

NIGEL
I left my wallet at the bar, and my cape name's Policemen Have Tiny Balls. Catchy, right?

ANGLE ON the TV reporter, who's interviewing the Police Captain. IN THE B.G., Nigel and the cop are getting increasingly heated.

TV REPORTER
...So what do we know about the hostage-taker?

POLICE CAPTAIN
Well, she's a sweater-folder gone rogue, and she's got the store manager tied up on the roof with a bomb.

Bored, Nigel CASUALLY HEAD-BUTTS the cop, who falls to the ground. Nigel steps over him and heads toward the Captain.

TV REPORTER
What's she so angry about?

POLICE CAPTAIN
He made her some promise that now he doesn't even remember, so she's going to blow up the store. But don't worry, we've called in an expert mind-reader.

Nigel walks into their shot.

NIGEL
Just so you know, Officer Bennett's a bleeder. Which way to the stairs?

POLICE CAPTAIN
You're the psychic -- you tell me.

NIGEL
No way I'm going inside your brain. It smells of porn and Cheetos.
ANOTHER COP
Hurry! She's cut the power!

NIGEL
Okay, business time. I'm going to need a pint of milk, a quart of vodka and a regulation nightstick.
(off the Captain's look)
What? Do I tell you how to do your job?

EXT. SUBURBAN BACKYARD - LATER

Backstage, Pete is with the girl's father, jogging in place, warming up. Pete hands him a small cassette player.

PETE
This'll fire 'em up. Hit it.

The father presses play. Pete beams as his theme song plays:

PETE (ON TAPE) (CONT'D)
Who's the coolest cape around?
Born just east of Parry Sound?
Chillout's sweet like yogurt's frozen
Ladies, try and keep your clothes on!

There's a pause as the man looks at him.

DAD
Made that yourself, huh?

PETE
Yeah! How'd you guess?
(then)
Okay, let's do this!

He bounds onstage. Katherine, the birthday girl, is in a wheelchair at the front.

PETE (CONT'D)
Hey, kids, I'm Chillout. Who's heard of me?
(no response)
Not everyone. And who likes superpowers?
(they cheer)
Great! 'Cause I have powers aplenty. Check this out...

He powers up his hand, then opens to reveal a small ice object.

SHORT KID
What's that?
PETE
It's a duck. A tiny frozen sculpture of a duck.

TALL KID
Looks like an ice cube.

PETE
No, no. It's a duck.

FAT KID
Where's its head? And its wings?

PETE
You know, your eyes are very young. They haven't formed properly yet.

KATHERINE
Can you make my name with your ice powers?

PETE
I sure can, birthday chair. Girl!

Pete powers up his hand again, and reveals... another ice cube.

PETE (CONT'D)
Ta-da! That is a tiny, icy sculpture of the word "Katherine."

KATHERINE
It looks like another ice cube.

PETE
Hey, if you don't believe me... take my word for it!
(offering it to her)
Take it.

KATHERINE
Don't want it.

PETE
Take the ice sculpture, Katherine.

KATHERINE
No. It looks cold.

She bursts into tears. The kids start to boo.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
Dad! Why couldn't you get me a real superhero?
PETE
Aw, don't say that. Kids can be so cruel.
(then, still trying)
Hey, how 'bout this? Who wants frostbite? Katherine?

EXT. FLAGSHIP STORE - UPPER FLOOR - SAME TIME

A partially-constructed upper floor with open sides. Store manager Steve is tied to an wheeled office chair with a variety of scarves from the store's inventory. Jill has brought up several stacks of clothes and folds them compulsively.

JILL
Six hundred twenty-one, six hundred twenty-two...

STEVE
Stop folding chinos and let me off this chair, you crazy bitch!

JILL
Not 'til you remember what you promised. And dammit, you made me lose count.

NIGEL (O.S.)
Interesting.

REVEAL Nigel in the doorway, stirring a White Russian with a regulation nightstick. He delicately tastes a drop off the base of the nightstick and nods -- it's good.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
Less a White Russian, more a milky vodka. Still...

He knocks it back. Jill retreats, picking up the detonator.

JILL
Don't come any closer! This is a detonator!

NIGEL
Yup. Guesssed that.

He advances on Jill. Steve chuckles, goading her.

STEVE
Oh, you're dead now. They finally sent a costume. What're you gonna do, Superhero? Chop her arms off with

(MORE)
your eye-lasers? Blast her off the edge with some kind of tornado?

NIGEL
My name's Brainstorm. I read minds.

STEVE
(smugly pleased)
Ha-HA!

NIGEL
...within three meters.

STEVE
What? That's it? That's the lamest power I've ever heard.

NIGEL
Everyone's a bloody critic.

He edges toward Jill. She backs away.

JILL
Stay back! I'm still trying to do the metric conversion!

STEVE
Go get her, dumbass!

Nigel stops and cocks his head to do a read.

STEVE (CONT'D)
What are you doing?? She's way more than three meters!

NIGEL
See, that's your mistake, "dumb arse." It's not her I was reading.

Without turning, he SLAMS his elbow into Steve's shocked face. Steve reels for a moment, then slumps forward, unconscious.

INT. LIMO - SAME TIME

The limo approaches the red carpet. Crowds of fans, paparazzi.

CALLIE
Looks like it's a pretty big deal.

BRADLEY
Looks like I'm a pretty big deal. You know, you could have all this if you wanted. Invisibility's a blue-chip power.
CALLIE
Yeah, been there, done that, had my face on a lunchbox. Fame's just a bunch of phony, shallow idiots sucking up to you all the time.

BRADLEY
Exactly! It's fantastic! And you could have it again. All you'd have to do is dump Fruity Mind-Reader, Chunky Spinster and Sniveling Icebox.

CALLIE
Yeah, those are my best friends you're talking about.

BRADLEY
Who crapping cares? Sweetheart, when you're on the A-list, you can buy best friends.

Callie’s face clouds. Suddenly, the car judders to a halt.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)
Hey, chauffeur, where'd you learn to drive? Tiananmen Square?

He climbs out -- the crowd roars. Callie mutters to herself:

CALLIE
Screw this.

She TURNS INVISIBLE. Bradley calls from outside:

BRADLEY (O.S.)
Come on, then -- arm-muffin time.

He sticks his head back in -- and sees the empty limo.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)
Knew it. Lesbian.

Then he spots the party invitation on the seat.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

EXT. SUBURBAN BACKYARD - LATER

Pete struggles to control the increasingly angry kids.

FAT KID
You're not a real superhero! You
don't even have a secret base!

PETE
I have an apartment. And you don't
know where it is, so it's kind of a
secret.

TALL KID
What about a special car?

PETE
Ah, yes, the Chillmobile. It's in the
shop right now, but it's a pretty high-
end Mazda.

Callie enters, unseen, and pauses to enjoy Pete's flailing.

FAT KID
In a fight between you and a lion, who
would win?

PETE
Hmm. Is it a big one?

FAT KID
Yes.

PETE
Probably the lion.

FAT KID
Your powers are gay, and you suck!

Other kids chime in with a chorus of boos. Callie DISAPPEARS.

PETE
Okay! I'd kill the lion! Is that
what you want to hear? I'd freeze
that stupid lion to death --

He realizes the kids have gone silent and are gaping at him.

PETE (CONT'D)
...What? Why are you staring at me?
Have I got something on my face?
KATHERINE
You... you can fly.

PETE
Oh, very funny. How'd you like if I went, "You can walk"?

Pete looks down... to see he's RISEN two feet off the ground!

PETE (CONT'D)
Oh my god! I can fly!

CALLIE (O.S.)
You can certainly eat burritos, fat boy.

PETE
(whispering)
Callie?

CALLIE (O.S.)
What am I lifting here, 300 pounds?

PETE
Thank you so, so much...!
(then, to kids, casually)
Yeah, this is me flying. I can fly now!

They cheer. Pete looks to Katherine:

PETE (CONT'D)
How ya like me now, Hot Wheels?

INT. WATCHTOWER - DARTS AREA - SAME TIME

Sandy and Butch are preparing to play. She's schoolgirl-giddy as he places three darts in her hand.

SANDY
I don't know... I'm not sure I'm very good at this game.

BUTCH
Relax. Your paws were made for darts. Such sensual, confident, ladylike thumbs.

Sandy giggles and fires a dart, which flies off wildly.

MAN (O.S.)
Hey!

SANDY
God, I'm so sorry!
BUTCH
    Aw, don't worry, darlin', that's just Claymaster.

ANGLE ON the man, who smiles and waves it off as he pulls the dart out of his face and smudges over the hole.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
    Lucky you didn't hit the fella next to him, though.

He points out another man, who's very round and shiny.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
    I'd still be pickin' bits o' Balloonatic out your hair at breakfast.

SANDY
    (blushes)
    Oh, gosh, breakfast. Right. Let me get us some more drinks.

As she heads off to the bar, Butch SCRATCHES HIS EAR COMPULSIVELY as if there's a flea there. It's pretty odd. Sandy reaches the bar, where Horseforce has been watching.

SANDY (CONT'D)
    Two beers, please. For two.

Horseforce SNORTS. Sandy acts like she just noticed him.

SANDY (CONT'D)
    Oh, hi, Horseforce. Any sign of your ponies?

HORSEFORCE
    Stallions. Still about forty minutes away. Pile-up in the tunnel.

Sandy smiles, takes her beers and walks away.

EXT. FLAGSHIP STORE - UPPER FLOOR - SAME TIME

Nigel's absently tying scarves together as Steve comes to.

STEVE
    Ow... What the hell was that for?

NIGEL
    (taps Steve's head)
    Here's what I saw in there: Office party. You fed her drinks. Promised she could be the new face of The Flap. (MORE)
Then took nudie photos of her in a cupboard. Ergo, you are a twat.

STEVE
That's it? That's why we're up here?

JILL
I told my whole family I was going to be fifty feet tall on the front of this shop with a Christmas hat and a reindeer bikini!

STEVE
Is it my fault you've got a big mouth?

JILL
It's your fault I've got a hundred-dollar back-alley Mexican boob job!

Nigel pulls taut one more scarf knot and mutters:

NIGEL
Should be enough.

He bends down to tie the scarf chain to the base of Steve's chair. Steve doesn't notice -- he's still talking to Jill.

STEVE
Okay, what do you want, an apology?
I'm sorry your breasts are two different sizes. Can I go home now?

NIGEL
Jill, I'm British. I'm used to an incredibly intense level of sarcasm. Did that sound sincere?

JILL
Not really.

NIGEL
Okay, then.

Without turning, Nigel violently BACK-HEELS Steve's chair, which speeds toward the edge. Steve SCREAMS as Nigel lets the chain of scarves run through his hand, not even looking.

STEVE
I'm sorry!

NIGEL
Bit windy up here. Did he say something?
STEVE
(speeding away)
I'm sorrrrryyyy!!

NIGEL
Is he crying yet?

JILL
Little bit.

NIGEL
I like that.

STEVE
(even further away)
I really am sorry!!

NIGEL
Okay. Sincere enough.

Nigel snaps his hand closed, grabbing the scarf, and Steve's chair STOPS just short of the edge.

STEVE
What was that?? I thought superheroes were supposed to use their powers responsibly!

NIGEL
(reeling Steve in)
God, everyone's always bollocking on about that. But don't worry, I've got a plan.

STEVE
Well, thank God.

NIGEL
Jill, would you hand me that charming little detonator? And Steve, I'm going to have to insist you take off all of your clothes.
    (off his terrified look)
Seriously. Chop-chop.

EXT. SUBURBAN BACKYARD - LATER

Pete is still "flying," playing to the crowd of admiring kids.

PETE
Wheeee! Look! I can fly to the left!

He slowly moves a few inches to the left. The kids cheer!
PETE (CONT'D)
I can fly to the right!

He slowly moves a few inches to the right. They cheer again!

CALLIE (O.S.)
Wrap it up. I'm running out of invisible juice.

PETE
I can fly really high up!

CALLIE (O.S.)
No, Pete, you really can't.

Suddenly, the kids STOP cheering. Pete doesn't notice at first.

PETE
Come on! Higher! High into the sky!

CUT WIDE to see a NOW-VISIBLE CALLIE struggling to hold him up.

KATHERINE
You can't fly! An invisible girl was carrying you around!

CALLIE
Pete -- I'm gonna drop you --

PETE
What?

She staggers and they FALL SPECTACULARLY onto the present table.

KATHERINE
This is the worst birthday ever.

BRADLEY (O.S.)
Well, let's see what we can do about that, shall we, Katherine?

The kids turn to see ULTIMATUM casually yet heroically standing in the back of the yard, holding the invitation.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)
I'm Ultimatum. Who's heard of me?
(they cheer)
'Course you have. Now, who wants to try on a medal made of pure gold?

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE
ACT FOUR

INT. WATCHTOWER - DARTS AREA - SAME TIME

Sandy and Butch are still flirtatiously playing darts.

BUTCH
Tell you what, little lady. You hit a number, any number at all, and I'll give you a kiss.

Still gazing in his eyes, Sandy SLAMS the dart at the board, hitting a double ten and splitting it clean off the wall.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
Don't say I didn't warn ya....

He goes in for a kiss -- and Sandy loves it. Then something changes, and she pulls away, slobber all over her chin.

SANDY
Whoa. Butch... what did you have for lunch?

BUTCH
Same as always. Bit of meat, bit of marrow. Then I needed to puke, so I went outside and ate some grass.

SANDY
Ookay. Butch, would I be right in thinking you've got canine-based powers?

BUTCH
Ya got me. Dogstar's the cape name. And you ain't never gonna find a boyfriend more faithful than me. Stroke my hair.

He leans down and Sandy strokes his head.

SANDY
Gosh, it's so soft!
(then, catching herself)
But wait. Are there any downsides I should know about?

BUTCH
Hmm. I do get ringworm.

SANDY
Oh.
BUTCH
But you've wormed a guy before, right? Plus sometimes, when we're in the street, if I see a pretty gal, I might start humpin' her right there and then. Oh, and after I visit the bathroom, I may need to drag my butt around the carpet for a little while --

SANDY
Okay, this isn't going to work.

BUTCH
But you're my girl now! I ain't never gonna leave you!

Sandy looks around helplessly for a moment. Then breaks an antler off a deer-head on the wall and sighs.

SANDY
This is over. Get lost, Butch.

She tosses it, and Butch happily lopes off. As Sandy gazes dolefully after him, a smirking Horseforce saunters up.

HORSEFORCE
Oh, did your date not work out? Guess somebody bet on the wrong horse.

INT. SUBURBAN BACKYARD - SAME TIME

Pete is with the birthday girl's dad, who's quite annoyed.

DAD
...You lied to me, you made my daughter cry, and you got three kids so angry they messed their pants. So, no, you're not getting a tip. You're not getting a penny from me, Chillout.

PETE
Finally! You got my name right!
(then)
Mind if I grab some of the leftover mini-pizzas?

ANGLE ON Ultimatum, surrounded by adoring children.

BRADLEY
...So I'm at the Mayor's Gala, and it's full of bigwigs, supermodels, Dennis Quaid, and then I thought... where is a superhero really needed? A sweet little girl's birthday party.
(MORE)
BRADLEY (CONT'D)
(then)
You've got three minutes, then I'm going back.

KATHERINE
But why me?

BRADLEY
You know what, Katherine?

He looks past her to Callie.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)
Every little girl should get a chance to spend a night with a real hero.

He gives Callie a sleazy wink. She smiles thinly and holds up the back of her fist.

CALLIE
(aside to Pete)
Think he can see which invisible finger I'm holding up?

Ultimatum addresses the kids:

BRADLEY
Okay, time's up. But before I go -- who wants to help me fight crime?

KIDS
Me! Me!

BRADLEY
(re Pete and Callie)
Well, see those two losers over there? They're actually supervillains. And what do we do with supervillains?

KIDS
Kill them!

BRADLEY
Yeah! I mean, I was actually going to say "get them," but I like your plan more!

As the children rush them, Pete gapes, horrified.

PETE
God almighty! It's a stampede! Callie, do something!
CALLIE
Yeah, I've carried you way too much for one day, Pig-Out. See you back at the Watchtower.

She TURNS INVISIBLE as the kids descend on Pete. He screams and goes down.

PETE
Arrr! Not the face! Please stop biting my face!

EXT. FLAGSHIP STORE - ENTRANCE - SAME TIME

Nigel emerges, escorting Jill and carrying shopping bags.

POLICE CAPTAIN
That was quick.

NIGEL
'Course it bloody was -- I'm a professional.

POLICE CAPTAIN
Aren't you forgetting something?

NIGEL
Oh, yeah, the hostage. Here he comes.

Steve, still tied to the chair but stripped to his underwear, bursts out and wheels himself screaming toward them.

POLICE CAPTAIN
Geez, is he all right?

NIGEL
He is now, but he won't be if he doesn't get a move on. You see --

BOOM! A huge explosion. Steve goes flying but is unharmed.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
(not missing a beat)
-- You see, the bomb was on this fiddly little timer, and I couldn't be arsed to work it out. Anyway, I'm off to the pub.

POLICE CAPTAIN
Wait a second. I got a happy terrorist, a wrecked building, and --
(re Steve)
-- that guy wasn't naked before!
NIGEL
Again: do I tell you how to do your job?

INT. WATCHTOWER - LATER

Pete enters, disheveled and limping. He passes Horseforce and indicates outside.

PETE
Just so you know, some of your horses just attacked a guy's Prius.

He joins the other three at their table.

SANDY
Oh my gosh, Pete, what happened to your face?

PETE
They're tread marks. Vicious little bitch.

ANGLE ON the bar, where Bradley is once again watching TV with his acolytes.

TV REPORTER (ON TV)
...And on a night when he was receiving our city's biggest accolade, Ultimatum still found time to make a child's birthday wish come true.

They CUT to the backyard, where Ultimatum is lifting a delighted Katherine -- in her wheelchair -- over his head one-handed.

ULTIMATUM (ON TV)
Take that, cystic fibrosis!

The kids and parents cheer. In the bar, Bradley beams.

BRADLEY
And you want to know the best thing about kids' parties?
   (producing phone numbers)

Horny big sisters...
   (producing more numbers)

...and their horny moms!
   (off their laughter)

Hey, I'll do them on separate nights, I'm not an animal.

At the table, Pete is watching this.
PETE
Look at him. I will never be that famous.

He turns back to the other three and waits a beat.

NIGEL
Oh, sorry. Were we supposed to contradict you?

CALLIE
Fame's overrated anyway. All it does is bring you money, recognition, and lots of hollow, empty sex.
(beat)
It's not as good as I just made it sound.

PETE
If I'm never going to be more than a sideshow at kids' birthday parties, maybe I should just give up the dream and quit.

SANDY
You can't quit, any more than I can stop looking for my one perfect guy.

NIGEL
Or I can forget the cold, dead eyes of that rent-boy in Tangiers.

PETE
But what if I did quit? I'm more than my powers. There's lots of other things I can do.

CALLIE
Really?

PETE
Sure. I can bake, I have a pleasant phone voice... Maybe I could even rededicate myself to my music.

Beat.

SANDY/CALLIE/NIGEL
Do not give up your dream. / That's just wrong. / You're a bloody hero.

PETE
You're right. It could still happen. After all, I'm just one small, local, (MORE)
PETE (CONT'D)
heat-based emergency away from
stardom.
(then)
Thanks, guys.

There's an O.S. WHINNY. Sandy looks off.

SANDY
Do you think he's ever going to move?

REVEAL BUTCH in the corner, gently panting with big puppy eyes,
the antler at his feet.

CALLIE
He has been sitting there for ages.

PETE
Imagine how long it is in dog years.

They react to something else Butch is doing.

NIGEL
On the plus side, it looks like Butch
can lick his own undercarriage.

CALLIE
Sandy, when you kissed that guy -- did
he use his tongue?

Sandy winces. The others laugh.

FADE OUT.