

Hello! I'm Laura, the playwright of *The Secretaries*.

If you would like to perform this script, please contact me through my website www.laura-neill.com or at laura.j.neill@gmail.com. I will get back to you within a week, usually sooner.

Royalties for one performance are usually \$50, but if that cost is prohibitive to your organization, please reach out and let's chat about a sliding-scale fee.

If you'd like to use one of the scenes for an audition or monologue competition, or use this play in a classroom setting (i.e. no audience), that's free! Just please drop me a line so I can send good vibes your way.

THE SECRETARIES
by Laura Neill

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Characters

ANNA	No superpowers except intelligence; W or NB. Teen.
BREE	Secretary, ANNA's partner and a real hero; any gender. Teen.
CURT, a.k.a. CURT	Can abbreviate time; any gender. Teen.
MO, a.k.a. SMASH SUPER	Super-strength; any gender, preference for W. Teen.
BOBBI, a.k.a. BABBLING BOBBI	Can bore people unconscious; any gender. Teen.
SAM, a.k.a. HANG TEN	Can give people hangnails and make them get infected; any gender. Teen.
MX MEDUSA	Trainer; any gender. Any age.
Ensemble of other SUPERHEROES	Optional; imagine how many powers we can see in the halls of the Institute!

A Note on Pronouns

Pronouns in the script default to they/she but can be changed to fit the actor playing the part.

Synopsis

Anna is a superhero!!! That's what her acceptance letter to the YZ Institute says--but when she gets there, she's informed it was a mistake, and she's reassigned to be a secretary. The “real” superheroes-in-training are impressive, but their arrogance makes it hard for Anna to fit in. To make things worse, the trainer Mx Medusa suddenly goes missing. When Anna suspects that one of the so-called heroes may be to blame—and may be planning to use their powers for evil—she and her fellow "secretary" Bree must team up to save the world as we know it.

Run Time

30-35 minutes

(A waiting room. Simple--just a row of chairs. The only hint that this place is different comes from the portraits on the walls, which seem to be pictures of various superheroes, or magazines on a little table, superhero-related. CURT is sitting in one of the chairs. ANNA enters excitedly.)

Hey!

ANNA

Hi.

CURT

Is this the... YZ Institute?

ANNA

As far as I can tell. They said to wait.

CURT

I'm so excited to be here!

ANNA

I can't tell.

CURT

(They laugh awkwardly.)

It'll be great to be around other specials. I've been waiting for so long to be somewhere where everyone is just like me.

I know! I can't wait to find out what my powers are!

ANNA

You mean you don't know?

CURT

You mean you know already?

ANNA

Maybe there are like different sections...

CURT

(Enter BOBBI.)

BOBBI

My finest comrades, which is to say friends, which is to say colleagues, which is to say fellow super-people! I am ultimately and spontaneously and gladly glad to see, which is to say envision, which is to say look upon, which is to say--

(ANNA and CURT start yawning.)

CURT
(to ANNA)

Are you getting sleepy?

ANNA

...Yeah.

BOBBI

--which is to say imagine in one's mind's eye, which is to say become aware of, which is to say cognize in my neural patterns for the very first time--

(CURT snaps their fingers. There is a zipping sound. BOBBI looks confused.)

BOBBI

--you. ...Hey, I wasn't done! --which is to say--

(CURT zips again. BOBBI skips.)

BOBBI

--unfair!

ANNA

Did you just--

CURT

I abbreviate time. No big deal.

BOBBI

Uncool. Which is to say—

(CURT holds up their fingers as a warning.)

—fine, I'll skip—I bore people unconscious.

CURT

Really?

ANNA

Literally?

CURT

You were trying to bore us *unconscious*?

BOBBI

Babbling Bobbi, at your service. I thought we were supposed to showcase our powers.

CURT

Not on each *other*.

BOBBI

Oh, poor little time-abbreviator can't handle the heat?

CURT

It's Curt.

BOBBI

Original. You think the bad guys are gonna wait for you to demonstrate while they're taking over the world?

CURT

Are you planning to take over the world? --And are *you* really making fun of my name?

BOBBI

I mean... it's like a *normal person* name...

CURT

And “Babbling Bobbi” is the next Superman?

ANNA

So you both have powers already.

BOBBI

Um... don't you?

ANNA

(distraction tactic)

--Kind of rude to try to bore us unconscious, right, Curt?

BOBBI

Kind of rude to abbreviate my speech, which is to say cut off my tongue, which is to say put a damper on our relationship, which is to say--

(CURT zips.)

BOBBI

--my parade. Hey.

(Enter BREE, looking exhausted.)

BREE

Curt? Is Curt here?

CURT

That's me.

BREE

Hi, I'm Bree, I'm the secretary. I'll be helping you with your paperwork. Right this way...

(BREE and CURT exit.)

BOBBI

Fancy. I wonder if we get our own personal secretaries.

ANNA

I don't know...

BOBBI

I mean, it's gonna be a lot of work boring the bad guys to death. I guess I'll need someone to help with the little things.

ANNA

...Right...

BOBBI

Not like, little, I don't mean to diminish the secretarial profession or disrespect the contributions of the unpowered working-class or demean the people who are going to work for us or anything--

(ANNA yawns.)

BOBBI

Hey, I wasn't using my power.

ANNA

Sorry.

BOBBI

What's your name?

ANNA

Anna.

BOBBI

And your power is...

ANNA

A mystery.

BOBBI

Oh, playing it close to the vest, huh?

ANNA

...Yeah. Exactly.

Careful, Andi. BOBBI

/ --Anna. ANNA

/ We're gonna be on a team. You gotta reach out and make friends. You know? Can't play the mystery card forever. BOBBI

I'm not trying to be a mystery. I just... don't... ANNA

(Enter MO and SAM. MO makes a big, confident entrance. SAM slinks off to the side and sits.)

What's UP? You must be my new sidekicks. MO

Um-- ANNA

Don't make me laugh. Who are you? BOBBI

Just the best superhero in the room. MO

Oh, really? BOBBI

Yup. MO

Wanna bet? BOBBI

Ten cupcakes. MO

Who eats ten cupcakes? BOBBI

You saying you're scared? MO

Um, hi... ANNA

Babbling Bobbi isn't scared of anybody. BOBBI

How fortunate for Babbling Bobbi. MO

(MO offers their arm.)

How bout a friendly arm-wrestle? MO

Ha. Sure. BOBBI

I've gotta warn you—I'm stronger than I look. MO

I'm sure you are. BOBBI

(They get in position. BOBBI talks as MO waits for their moment. They appear to get sleepier.)

BOBBI
I'm sure you are, as you say, more potent in strength than you appear, which is to say than can be discerned with the naked eye, which is to say can be gleaned by the natural human viewer, which is to say can be imagined by the regular entity who is looking upon you, which is to say the audience, which is to say the voyeur, which is to say the mammalian creature that utilizes its vision-centered appendages to decipher the light rays bouncing from each facet of your--

(MO stops pretending to be sleepy and flips BOBBI over.)

Ow! BOBBI

So you're... boring. MO

And you're... the stupid hulk. BOBBI

Smash Super at your service. MO

MO and BOBBI
(sarcastically)

Great power.

(Then they laugh and shake hands.)

MO

Good to meet you, boredom wizard.

BOBBI

Good to meet you, honorable hulk.

MO

So they do select the teams for a reason.

BOBBI

Brains and brawn.

MO

Who you calling brains?

(They laugh together. SAM groans.)

BOBBI

Problem?

MO

Are you the resident emo hipster?

(SAM rolls their eyes.)

BOBBI and MO

Yup.

MO
(to ANNA)

And how do you fit into the picture? Don't suppose you can wiggle your fingers and transform the emo hipster into a butterfly?

ANNA

Not exactly.

BOBBI

She's being mysterious.

MO

...Mysterious.

BOBBI
Won't tell me what she can do.

ANNA
I just--

MO
Do you not know?

ANNA
Well, I--

BOBBI
Is that a thing?

MO
Some people come and they have no idea why they're here...

ANNA
Well--

MO
Look, if that's what's up, I'm sure they'll find a power for you. Some people it just takes a while to discover it. You'll be okay.

(SAM rolls their eyes and sighs loudly.)

(BREE enters again.)

BREE
Anna?

ANNA
(stands up too quickly)

Me!

BREE
Great. Come with me.

(ANNA walks to BREE; lights on them. BOBBI and MO continue to demonstrate their powers. CURT re-joins them and adds to the demonstration. Noises from this activity punctuate ANNA and BREE's conversation.)

BREE
So, hi! I'm Bree.

I'm Anna. ANNA

Great. Well, welcome to the YZ Institute. BREE

Thanks! ANNA

Do you know why you're here? BREE

...No. ANNA

(BREE presses a button and ANNA's records are displayed on screens all around.
Note: If you don't have access to a projector, Bree can check a paper file.)

I have you down for electric laser eyes? BREE

Um-- ANNA

Can you just do a quick demo of that for me? BREE

Laser eyes? ANNA

Yup! That's your probable power. BREE

...Okay. ANNA

Just aim at this wall—it's super-proof. Don't worry. You won't hurt anyone. BREE

(ANNA tries very, very hard to laser-eye the wall. Nothing happens.)

Sorry-- ANNA

It's okay. Nerves can affect super-powers. Sometimes. BREE

(ANNA tries harder. She only manages to make her eyes hurt from the strain.)

Ow.	ANNA
Oh.	BREE
Oh?	ANNA
It's okay. You can stop trying.	BREE
I just don't think... I don't think lasers are my thing. Maybe it's another thing?	ANNA
Anna...	BREE
Don't kick me out. I belong here! I swear I do! I feel it! I really--	ANNA
It's okay.	BREE
Don't sound all sad and whatever. I'm--	ANNA
You're normal.	BREE
What?	ANNA
Sometimes our data is wrong.	BREE
No. No no no no it can't just be <i>wrong</i> , I just need--	ANNA
I'm sorry.	BREE
I can't... go back home without... My parents think I'm at genius camp for eight whole weeks.	ANNA

I know how you feel. BREE

No, you don't. You don't know-- ANNA

I was super-spike. BREE

What? ANNA

They brought me in when I was sixteen, just like you. They thought I could shove spikes out of my skin like a porcupine. BREE

And you-- ANNA

Definitely could not. BREE

And they-- ANNA

Kept me on anyway. BREE

To file paperwork. ANNA

Gee, sound more excited. BREE

I didn't mean-- ANNA

I know you're disappointed. I was too. ...But-- BREE

But what? ANNA

Well, I was going to say that being a secretary is just as awesome—but that's just not true. BREE

(In the waiting room, SAM gives everyone hangnails, interrupting their

demonstration of their talents.)

Ow! MO

Ow! BOBBI

OW! CURT

What the heck? BOBBI

Did you just give me a—*hangnail*? MO

Wow, that hurts. CURT

Real cute, emo hipster. BOBBI

The name's Hang Ten. SAM

How... original. MO
(laughs)

I can infect it if you want. SAM

Infect it? CURT

Laugh now. You won't laugh later. SAM

(The others freeze for a second, then burst out laughing again.)

BREE
(looks at ANNA)
Sometimes it's better to not have powers.

(BREE hands ANNA a clipboard. ANNA goes and sits in the back of the waiting room, which becomes a classroom. The heroes are joking around.)

CURT

Watch, I'll be Bobbi. On occasion the use of the classroom modality, which is to say the educational space, which is to say--

BOBBI

ZIP!

CURT

Oh, uh, the end.

MO

Idiots.

BOBBI

Oh, I'll be MO.

CURT

Smash Super!

BOBBI

(strong noise)

Hauhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.

(BOBBI breaks a pencil.)

MO

Oh, no, wait, I'll be Sam.

(They points their fingers dramatically at the others. They cringe in fear.)

Just you wait until your *hangnails* appear.

(MO cackles.)

(MX MEDUSA enters. They have a commanding air. Suddenly the stage is silent and incredibly still.)

MEDUSA

Believe it or not, my little heroes... your powers are not *toys*. Do not pretend they are. Or you will find yourself becoming the toy of a society that does not embrace your gifts. There have been heroes who are locked up. Killed. Worse—forgotten. All ill can happen when you do not respect your powers. You are not individual competitors who are making paper sailboats to play with in the kiddie pool. You are a team. You *will be* a team of elite heroes who operate through the YZ Institute to rid our society of super-villains. Right now, you are children. Do not forget that. The first thing you will learn will be humility. Now. You are going to play the quiet game for a few minutes. Whoever speaks first... *loses*. Anna, with me.

(MX MEDUSA beckons to ANNA and ANNA follows into an office.)

I hear you don't possess laser eyes.

MEDUSA

Not yet.

ANNA

I apologize for our mistake.

MEDUSA

It wasn't a mistake.

ANNA

I mean, in assuming you had powers. We should not have invited you here.

MEDUSA

I'm glad to be here, Mx Medusa.

ANNA

Mmmm. Well. Now that you're here for the summer, we'll have to reassign you to clerical work. I trust you've met Bree?

MEDUSA

Shouldn't I undergo some other tests?

ANNA

Have you met Bree?

MEDUSA

But—I thought I might--

ANNA

Please answer the question.

MEDUSA

...Yes.

ANNA

Report to her for your duties, please. Your room and board will of course continue to be covered.

MEDUSA

But Mx Med--

ANNA

Did I stutter?

MEDUSA

(ANNA opens her mouth to say something and then changes her mind. ANNA retreats and finds BREE while MX MEDUSA returns to the class.)

ANNA
So it's official.

BREE
Welcome to the club.

ANNA
What do we do, sort paperclips for eight weeks?

BREE
First job is to learn more about our heroes-in-training. Study up so we can assign them sidekicks--

ANNA
...Do we have to call them heroes-in-training?

BREE
Sometimes I call them PIATs.

ANNA
Which means...

BREE
Pain-in-the-ass-in-training.

ANNA
Ha. PIATs. Yeah.

BREE
I'm kind of glad you're not one of them.

ANNA
Yeah?

BREE
This year's batch kind of seem like jerks. I mean, they usually do. --At least this way I'll have some company?

(BREE passes ANNA a folder. They read and take notes.)

(In the classroom, MX MEDUSA gives the heroes an assignment.)

MX MEDUSA
Your first task is to transform this object.

(They place something innocent, like a stapler, in the middle of the stage.)

Ummm....
MO

Transform, like...?
BOBBI

Use your powers.
MX MEDUSA

And how am I supposed to--
CURT

No further questions.
MX MEDUSA

(They step back.)

(BREE and ANNA peer towards the heroes.)

Mx Medusa is a little... standoffish?
ANNA

That's one word for it.
BREE

What do you think they'll do? The heroes?
ANNA

What do PIATs always do? --Complain.
BREE

This is training?
BOBBI
(to the others)

I mean, I can transform the heck outta that--
MO

I can abbreviate time to the apocalypse and it'll melt?
CURT

Are you serious?
BOBBI

...No.... just trying to be useful.

CURT

Just let me smash it.

MO

Is that your answer to everything?

BOBBI

Do you have a *better* idea?

MO

(Suddenly, the lights go out. All is dark. The heroes scream.)

Oh no.

BREE

What the heck?

SAM

Where's the light switch?

MO

Is this training?

BOBBI

Is this some sort of--

CURT

Get away from me!

SAM

What's happening?

ANNA

Stay still.

BREE

ZIP.

CURT
(abbreviates time)

(The lights come back on. The stapler is gone. In its place, a note wafts to the floor.)

(BREE and ANNA rush into the training room.)

Mx Medusa? Mx Medusa!

BREE

What the HECK was that?

MO

I'm not sure I'm *learning* anything here--

BOBBI

I abbreviated the darkness--

CURT

Are we supposed to thank you?

SAM

What are you so mad about?

CURT

Hey, everyone!

ANNA

Oh, look, Ms. Mystery.

BOBBI

Ms. No-power, you mean.

CURT

Awkwardddd.

MO

There's a note!

ANNA

Well...?

BOBBI

It says... “We have Mx Medusa. We're not giving her back. Solve this one if you can... PIATs.”

ANNA

PIATs?

CURT

Mx Medusa is gone?

SAM

Someone *took* Mx Medusa?

BOBBI

What's a PIAT? CURT

Pain in the ass in training. BREE

And what is that supposed to mean? MO
(MO snatches the note from ANNA.)
It's signed. "Love, the secretaries."

(The heroes all turn to look at BREE and ANNA.)

It wasn't us. ANNA

It says "the secretaries"? BREE

You're the only one who knows what a PIAT is. CURT

We don't sign our mail, "the secretaries"! BREE

We didn't do anything. We can't do anything-- ANNA

Riiiiight. Somebody gets no powers and decides to cry about it, huh? MO

Decides to mess up our training? BOBBI

Decides to *kill* our trainer? CURT

No one said Mx Medusa is dead. SAM

Stay out of this, hangnailer. CURT

Angie here is looking awful guilty. MO

ANNA
It's *Anna*.

BOBBI
Trying to be all mysterious when you showed up...

CURT
I don't like the look of you.

MO
I think we've got ourselves some perps.

BOBBI
And what do superheroes do with perps?

CURT
Think we gotta bring 'em in.

(The heroes start to close in. BREE and ANNA exchange glances and run.)

(BREE and ANNA hide/barricade themselves in the office. MO, BOBBI, and CURT bang on the barricade.)

BREE
Oh, this isn't good.

ANNA
What are we gonna do?

BREE
Mx Medusa is *gone*.

ANNA
But really—isn't this some sort of like training exercise?

BREE
Mx Medusa has never done this before. They usually start off slow...

ANNA
You mean Mx Medusa is really...

BREE
Either way, I don't think the PIATs are kidding about it being our fault.

ANNA
But we didn't do anything!

Do you think that matters to the PIATs? BREE

Um. So just to check, you didn't--? ANNA

I would never sign a note from “the secretaries.” BREE

It's just—I know you don't like them-- ANNA

Will you *focus*? We don't have time for you to doubt me! BREE

(A smash as MO smashes something in their direction.)

Come on outttt, murderers! MO

Kidnappers! BOBBI

Killers! CURT

No one said Medusa is *dead*! SAM

What do we do? BREE

The paperwork. ANNA

What? BREE

That's what we're here to do. ANNA

Now is not the time to be self-deprecating! BREE

I'm NOT! Grab a file! ANNA

Can you just--
BREE

Sam! Can you pull Sam's file up?
ANNA

Here.
BREE

(BREE pulls SAM's file up on the screens. If you don't have a projector, Bree can check a paper file.)

Sam dropped out of high school. I remember reading--
ANNA

Meaning?
BREE

A dropout—they have something against authority.
ANNA

Okay--
BREE

And they keep insisting MX Medusa isn't dead. Sounding guilty.
ANNA

And their test scores are high.
BREE

Way high. Smart enough to pull something like this off.
ANNA

And they have--
BREE

A lesser power. A motive.
ANNA

You think they're jealous?
BREE

I think Sam has every reason to want to take MX Medusa down.
ANNA

But--
BREE

ANNA

Medusa let the PIATs snicker all over Sam. Putting hangnails in a room with strength, time-warp and consciousness-stealing powers. Hangnails? What was Mx Medusa thinking?

BREE

It's Sam. What do we do?

ANNA

Um--

BREE

We need defenses.

ANNA

Defenses?

BREE

If we go out there without armor, they'll--

ANNA

Defenses.

(She grabs cotton balls and stuffs them in her ears.)

ANNA

For Bobbi.

BREE

Yes! And--

(BREE grabs gloves.)

In case Sam gets nasty—maybe their power has trouble penetrating plastic.

ANNA

Okay.

BREE

And Mo?

ANNA

Super strength, super strength... does Mo have a weak point?

(BREE pulls up Mo's file—projector or paper.)

BREE

Um... none discovered yet...

ANNA
Medical records. Have they ever broken anything?

BREE
Medical records. Yes. –An ankle!

ANNA
The Achilles heel? Really?

BREE
Aim for the ankle!

ANNA
And--

BREE
Curt.

ANNA
What can repel Curt? They can abbreviate *time*!

BREE
What distracts their focus?

ANNA
You think--

BREE
If they can't pay attention long enough—if we can distract him--

ANNA
A distraction could work on all of them. If we could just--

BREE
What distracts everyone?

ANNA
CAT PICTURES!

BREE
Perfect! I have a secret collection!

ANNA
That's purrrrrr-fect!

(BREE presses a button and cat pictures flicker on screens all around, then off.
Or, if you don't have a projector, Bree pulls a file folder out and hands some

pictures to Anna.)

(The heroes break through into the office, MO leading the way, SAM behind.)

CURT

Now you'll face us!

BOBBI

Can't run can't hide!

MO

Our vengeance will rain down upon you!

SAM

You sound more like villains than heroes...

BOBBI

Shut up, emo hipster.

ANNA

It's Sam.

MO

Those are some lame last words.

ANNA

It's Sam! We checked the file. They have a, a disrespect for authority and they--

MO

(mocking ANNA)

And they, and they--

ANNA

Sam's the one with the motive! You all treat them like crap!

BOBBI

Hmmm. Hangnail kid.

CURT

It could be hangnail kid.

MO

Good job, secretary.

SAM

Hey--

(The heroes surround SAM and tie them up.)

SAM (continued)

No! It's not me! It's not--

(SAM gives them all hangnails and infections.)

CURT

OW! Why do you have to have the most irritating power?

SAM

I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG!

MO

But that's what the secretaries say.

(They gag SAM.)

CURT

And everyone knows the secretaries are always right.

MO

They're the smartest ones in the room.

(Pause. Then CURT, MO, and BOBBI laugh.)

BOBBI

That's all you could come up with?

BREE

What?

BOBBI

You thought it was *Sam*?

ANNA

Well—yes, we--

CURT

So willing to jump to conclusions.

ANNA

But--

MO

So willing to doubt the one who's most like you.

ANNA

I just--

CURT

Tsk, tsk, tsk. You really should've thought this out a bit more.

MO

After all... Hangface here is just an innocent.

BOBBI

Mx Medusa, on the other hand, is an irresponsible trainer, which is to say she is unfit for duty, which is to say she is removable from her position, which is to say she is a fallen figure, which is to say she should be a fallen figure, which is to say certain people may be in their rights to remove her from power, which is to say such people could be within their rights to remove her from power, which is to say--

(CURT zips time.)

CURT, BOBBI, and MO

It was us.

(From under their gag, SAM makes an angry loud noise.)

BREE and ANNA

You?

BREE

You.

MO

And to think we thought they could be a threat.

CURT

Ha.

BOBBI

So quick to believe that it's the weaker one's fault.

CURT

So handy how that works.

MO

So nice how you've been trained.

BOBBI

No one ever believes it's the nice strong hero...

ANNA

Oh.

Look, everyone--

BREE

I think you mean, look, *PIATs*?

BOBBI

How dare you call us that?

MO

There's a reason you're weaker.

CURT

And uglier.

MO

And stupider.

BOBBI

We're the heroes.

CURT, MO, BOBBI

And we're making the world safe for you.

MO

So sit back, relax,--

BOBBI

--and let us take control.

CURT

Sit back, which is to say, place your buttocks on the ground, which is to say, relax your knees, which is to say, lower yourselves, which is to say, find your place, which is to say, Mx Medusa isn't here to protect you anymore, which is to say she can't save you from anything anymore, which is to say she, that is the mistress, which is the so-called teacher, which is the professor, which is the--

BOBBI

(BREE and ANNA ram their earplugs further into their ears.)

What are they doing? Stop them!

CURT

(MO and CURT go to charge BREE and ANNA.)

Kick Mo's heel!

ANNA

Got it! BREE

Smash Super! MO

Paperwork Smash! ANNA

(BREE and ANNA take MO down by kicking them in the heel.)

(To CURT, they hold up or project the cat pictures.)

Look! It's so fluffy! BREE

And so fuzzy! ANNA

And so distracting! BREE

Beeee distracted! ANNA

Sooooo distracted! BREE

Curt, from your paperwork-- ANNA

We secretaries *love paperwork--* BREE

We know you're actually a procrastinator. ANNA

And you have SIX cats. BREE

Beeeeee distracted by GrumpyCatttt! ANNA

(CURT holds their head. MO holds their heel. BOBBI talks to no avail.)

BOBBI
Listen to me! Why aren't you fainting, which is to say losing consciousness, which is to say

BOBBI (continued)

succumbing to my powers, which is to say melting into oblivion, which is to say reducing your intelligence, which is to say departing from this reality, which is to say taking a vacation from sense, which is to say--

MO
(getting sleepy)

Bobbi--

BOBBI

Which is to say absolving yourselves from truth, which is to say eliminating your reason, which is to say keeling over like a, like a, like a big fluffy cat with jetlag--

(CURT and MO lose consciousness. Does BOBBI fall asleep too?)

BOBBI

Oops.

(Yup, they're all asleep.)

(BREE and ANNA untie SAM and use the rope to tie up the villains.)

SAM
(spits out gag)

Ugh.

ANNA

Sam. I'm--

SAM

The emo kid didn't do it.

ANNA

I know.

BREE

I'm sorry.

ANNA

We're sorry.

SAM

It's whatever.

ANNA

Thanks for... giving them hangnails.

SAM

Uh-huh.

(A slow clap is heard. Mx MEDUSA enters, perfectly all right.)

BREE

Mx Medusa!

MEDUSA

Nice work.

ANNA

But you're--

SAM

You're supposed to be--

MEDUSA

Did you really think these three greenhorns could incapacitate me?

SAM and ANNA

Well--

BREE

Of course not, Mx Medusa.

MEDUSA

Ah, Bree. You were losing your mind with the rest of them.

ANNA

So what *was* this?

SAM

They were really trying to overthrow you?

MEDUSA

Oh, they thought they got me. Bunch of arrogant rebels. Sure. But you'll learn quickly. Just pretend to be unconscious and they think they've won. Oldest trick in the book.

BREE

You could have saved us.

MEDUSA

I prefer to test you.

ANNA

Test us?

MEDUSA

Bree's always telling me secretaries are worth something. You had a misstep with the misidentification of Hang Ten here, that's for sure, but you recovered nicely with the cat pictures.

ANNA

You were... *testing* us.

MEDUSA

I am pleasantly rewarded due to my complete lack of expectation of your success.

SAM

Well, at least they're honest.

MEDUSA

Was that snark from the peanut gallery?

ANNA

Maybe a little.

MEDUSA

Don't start with insubordination now. Given your performance today, I'd like to invite you to join the team.

BREE

The team?

MEDUSA

Not you, Bree. I need you behind the scenes. And Mx. Hangnail allowed himself to be taken out of the picture all too readily. But our new trainee Anna here... she has potential.

BREE

“Behind the scenes.”

ANNA

But Bree was the one who--

MEDUSA

Don't interrupt, please. We'll get you a badge and you can be the regulator of the trainees. Given your ingenuity, with a little solid mentorship, you'll have no trouble keeping them in check.

ANNA

No.

MEDUSA

Excuse me?

ANNA

I said no! Bree was the brains here—and Sam used their power—and, and—you invite us all here and then you treat us like this? You act like we're the ones who need to impress you? Mx Medusa, you're the one who needed to impress us. And you haven't done a particularly excellent job.

MEDUSA

I never!

BREE

Anna--

ANNA

Bree, you don't need her. She kept you here for months and months after she figured out—after she *thought*—that you were “useless.” You're more powerful without her. And so am I.

SAM

Standing up to the man! The meek will rule the world!

ANNA

--Sure. Emo rebel slogans all over the place!

SAM

Yeah!

MEDUSA

But my organization...

ANNA

If you run it like this, no wonder you get jerks who try to power-grab and bully their way through you. I've had enough of this hierarchical superhero nonsense. I'm leaving. Bree?

(BREE gathers up the paperwork and faces MX MEDUSA.)

BREE

Mx Medusa—thanks to you, I know your heroes' strengths and my own weaknesses. But now... you'll see their weakness and my strength. I'm taking these files to the press. Everyone will learn how broken this system is.

MEDUSA

...No. You can't.

ANNA and SAM

Yes, she can!

MEDUSA

No! I'll stop you! I'll--

BREE

You can't stop me. Because you don't have a power, either. I have access to all the files, remember? You showed up to the YZ Institute just like me, just like Anna, decades ago, and were told you could manage things behind the scenes. As long as you didn't let anyone know you were *just a secretary*. You've wasted your whole life telling that lie. Making “heroes” powerful, pretending that they're better than us. They're not better than us, Mx Medusa. “Hero” only means something if you use it right.

ANNA

And we will.

(They exit triumphantly.)

(Maybe Mx Medusa follows, deciding to help.)

(End of play.)