

The *Punisher*: The Play

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Adapted from “The *Punisher*” a sketch written by Amy Castonguay, directed by Amy Castonguay and Nick Bonatsakis. Including original music written and performed by Nick Bonatsakis.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

EXPOSITION - Possible voice over, has a very matter of fact way of speaking
PUNISHER - Literary super hero, bumbling
FOSSIL WATCH GUY
JEWELRY COUNTER EMPLOYEE
BLACKJACK DEALER
OBNOXIOUS PLAYER
ANNOYED PLAYER
VACCUM SALESPERSON
SUCKY CUSTOMER
MOVIE BUFF BOYFRIEND
HORRIFIED GIRLFRIEND
FORREST
BOTANY BABE
SIMILE – Literary super villain (twin of Metaphor)
METAPHOR - Literary super villain (twin of Simile)
OXYMORON - Literary superhero in-training
ONOMATOPOEIA - Literary superhero in-training
ANNA – The *Punisher*'s girlfriend, she knows he's a literary superhero, but he doesn't know that she is one too.
HOSTESS
WAITER
JOKE TELLER
CLEARLY NOT LORRAINE
CLICHÉ – Literary super hero, Mentor and trainer of the *Punisher*

Possibilities for Double/Triple Casting:

FOSSIL WATCH GUY – VACCUM SALESPERSON
JEWELRY COUNTER EMPLOYEE – SUCKY CUSTOMER
OBNOXIOUS PLAYER - MOVIE BUFF BOYFRIEND – JOKE TELLER
ANNOYED PLAYER – FORREST
BLACKJACK DEALER - WAITER
HORRIFIED GIRLFRIEND – CLEARLY NOT LORRAINE
BOTANY BABE - HOSTESS

SCENE I - In a department store in the jewelry department (make sure the Fossil brand name is someplace where it will be easily seen/read)

EXPOSITION

When Merriam-Webster published their first dictionary it created an unlimited source of literary power. This benevolent force found a constructive use when Literary League was formed; they are a powerful team of superheroes that enforce the rules of the English Language. Each gains strength from the proper use of their namesake literary term. One of the most legendary of these literary powerhouses was the *Punisher* . . .

FOSSIL WATCH GUY

Wow, these watches must be really old.

JEWELRY COUNTER EMPLOYEE

Why is that sir?

FOSSIL WATCH GUY

Because they're *fossils*!

(Cue theme music)

PUNISHER

(The PUNISHER jumps into the scene)

You Shall Be *Punished*!

FOSSIL WATCH GUY

Punished?!? What are you talking about?

PUNISHER

I avenge those made to listen to badly made puns. I am the *Punisher*; and I shall *punish* you for your words.

FOSSIL WATCH GUY

(picks up watch from counter, chuckles)

Well, I guess you'll have to *watch* me get way

(starts to run away)

PUNISHER

Maybe some quality *time* will change your attitude!

(The PUNISHER grabs FOSSIL WATCH GUY and forces him into the display case with all of the watches, throws several of the watches at him, and slams the lid/door of the case shut. The Punisher exits leaving the remaining people to stand around looking confused)

SCENE II - At a casino a bunch of people are sitting at a poker table.

(The BLACKJACK DEALER deals out the cards.)

BLACKJACK DEALER

Sir, the betting starts with you.

OBNOXIOUS PLAYER

Ten dollars

BLACKJACK DEALER

Ten Dollars to you miss.

ANNOYED PLAYER

Call

BLACKJACK DEALER

The next card up is the Jack of Diamonds. The bet goes to you again sir.

OBNOXIOUS PLAYER

I'd like to raise. But first I have a question.

BLACKJACK DEALER

How can I help you sir?

OBNOXIOUS PLAYER

Do you find it difficult to *deal* with your job at times?

(Cue theme music)

PUNISHER

(The PUNISHER jumps into the scene)

You Shall Be *Punished!*

OBNOXIOUS PLAYER

What? Punished?

PUNISHER

That's right. I've got a game that I think you'll be able to *pick-up!*

(The PUNISHER grabs the deck of cards from the table and flings them all at the offending OBNOXIOUS PLAYER . The PUNISHER exits; leaving the remaining people to sit around looking confused)

SCENE III - In a store that sells appliances.

(A SALESPERSON and a SUCKY CUSTOMER are talking.)

VACCUM SALESPERSON

This new model offers even more performance than the last one. It has a new system of rotating bristles that clean even better than ever before.

SUCKY CUSTOMER

How powerful is it?

VACCUM SALESPERSON

It's the highest power vacuum on the market right now.

SUCKY CUSTOMER

That's great because my last vacuum really *sucked*.

(Cue theme music)

PUNISHER

(The PUNISHER jumps into the scene)

You Shall Be *Punished!*

(The PUNISHER turns on the vacuum and starts trying to suck up the SUCKY CUSTOMER's shirt.)

SUCKY CUSTOMER

(Trying to get away)

Stop it! Let me go!

PUNISHER

If you think that *sucked*, this will really *blow* you away!

(The PUNISHER turns on the vacuum in reverse and it spews dust all over the SUCKY CUSTOMER. The PUNISHER exits; leaving the remaining people to stand around looking confused)

SCENE IV - A couple watching a horror movie (Preferably "The Exorcist")

(The MOVIE BUFF BOYFRIEND and HORRIFIED GIRLFRIEND are all snuggled up on the couch watching the movie. She keeps hiding her eyes from the screen or is watching through her hands.)

MOVIE BUFF BOYFRIEND

Are you scared?

HORRIFIED GIRLFRIEND

Oh, god, her head just spun all the way around! Do they save her?

MOVIE BUFF BOYFRIEND

Of course they do. But they have to be careful afterward.

HORRIFIED GIRLFRIEND

Why? *(sounds genuinely worried)*

MOVIE BUFF BOYFRIEND

Because, if they don't pay the exorcist, she might get *re-possessed*.

(Cue theme music)

PUNISHER

(The PUNISHER jumps into the scene)

You Shall Be *Punished*! Let's see if you can *exercise* your way out of this!

(The PUNISHER takes tape out of the VCR, pulls the ribbon out of it and ties MOVIE BUFF BOYFRIEND up with it. The PUNISHER exits)

Scene V - BOTANY BABE and FORREST are eating lunch.

BOTANY BABE

I think my Botany class is going to be really easy this term.

FORREST

Botany, huh? Speaking of plants, do you think those fake ones use *faux*-tosynthesis?

(BOTANY BABE sighs and rolls eyes.)

(Cue theme music)

PUNISHER

(The PUNISHER jumps into the scene)

You Shall Be Punished!

FORREST

What? Why?

(PUNISHER kicks FORREST in the shins. FORREST hops around in pain and falls down.)

PUNISHER

Because you are *lame*!

(The PUNISHER leans over FORREST.)

The next time you decide to make a play on words make sure you're ready for the game!

(The PUNISHER turns to the BOTANY BABE)

Did that joke leave you *pinning* for some one new?

(The PUNISHER offers his arm to BOTANY BABE. The PUNISHER and BOTANY BABE exit together.)

SCENE VI - In a dark secret lair of SIMILE and METAPHOR (*The secret lair looks like a cross between a messy apartment and mission control. There are switchboards and screens set up as well as clothes all over the floor and a counter covered with dishes.*)

EXPOSITION

Life is changing for the *Punisher* with punning at a world wide low; the *Punisher* has a lot of spare time on his hands. He has started training two new literary super heroes, Oxymoron and Onomatopoeia.

Using his fantastic punning skills and his secret identity of Marshal Arts, he's got a fantastic job, and a girlfriend, the beautiful Anna.

Ah, the life of a retired literary super hero.

But, recently the benevolent forces of literary power have encountered new and increasingly powerful foes. Twisting literary power to their own dark purposes, literary super villains have begun to rise, gaining strength from the improper use of their namesake literary term.

Unfortunately for the *Punisher*, two of these villains are forming a plan to use the *Punisher* for their own diabolical plan. . . .

SIMILE

(*SIMILE is holding a copy of the dictionary and is reading it. SIMILE becomes increasingly agitated, eventually snapping the book shut and slamming in onto the table/floor.*)

How dare they! A *simple* comparison of two unlike things using like or as? Simple? Me? Why, I'm as simple as a lever.

METAPHOR

What, do they think you're one of those three-dimensional puzzles?

(*Picks up the dictionary, flips to the page where metaphor is listed, and reads. METAPHOR then throws the book down.*)

I *suggest* an analogy or likeness? Why my comparisons make stone seem soft!

SIMILE

This must be stopped. Our definitions must be changed! We must take down the empire of Merriam-Webster.

METAPHOR

But how? The master dictionary is sealed inside an impenetrable fortress. Even with our combined strength we could not hope to break inside . . .

SIMILE

We must recruit others to our cause. We cannot be the only ones insulted by the words Merriam-Webster binds us with! Who has the most power of our literary brethren?

METAPHOR

Foreshadow, Anecdote, Epilogue, Conflict, and Irony all have great power. But, the greatest of all the literary superheroes has not been seen for years . . .

SIMILE

Metaphor, who would turn away from power that phenomenal?

METAPHOR

Fable tells that he's retired and training new literary superheroes.

SIMILE

(laughs)

The weakling Fable! Tell me who does Fable report this great source of power to be?

METAPHOR

The *Punisher*.

SIMILE

(Gasp with glee)

With the power of the *Punisher* we will be able to defeat Merriam-Webster.

METAPHOR

But, Simile, convincing him to cooperate with us will be more difficult than finding a needle in a pincushion.

SIMILE

But with the immense power of the *Punisher*, our defeat of Merriam-Webster will be as easy as particle physics!

METAPHOR

We must find the weakness of the *Punisher*, so we can use his power to smash into the fortress. Merriam-Webster must pay for their slanderous definitions!

(Both begin to laugh maniacally.)

SCENE VII - In the *Punisher's* training center.

(The PUNISHER paces back and forth in front of his two super heroes in training. SIMILE and METAPHOR are peeking in the windows watching the PUNISHER.)

PUNISHER

(The PUNISHER gestures to each trainee as he questions them.)

Remember your strength as a literary superhero comes from the use of your specific terminology. Onomatopoeia, what sound does your hand slapping your opponents face make?

ONOMATOPOEIA

Smack!

PUNISHER

Oxymoron, what's your favorite thing to have for dinner?

OXYMORON

..... jumbo shrimp?

PUNISHER

Onomatopoeia, what about slamming a door?

ONOMATOPOEIA

Bam!

PUNISHER

Oxymoron, what happens to steak that you freeze it for too long?

OXYMORON

..... Freezer burn?

PUNISHER

Excellent, that's all for today. It's time for me to make like a tree and *leaf*.

(The PUNISHER exits first. SIMILE and METAPHOR sneak up to the front door and narrowly miss catching the PUNISHER.)

Frustrated, SIMILE and METAPHOR hide behind the door hoping to capture either of the remaining superheroes. ONOMATOPOEIA and OXYMORON exit, OXYMORON opens the door very quickly and accidentally knocks out SIMILE and METAPHOR.)

ONOMATOPOEIA

Thwack! Thud!

(OXYMORON and ONOMATOPOEIA look at SIMILE and METAPHOR lying on the ground.)

OXYMORON

.act natural

(OXYMORON starts to walk away while ONOMATOPOEIA stares at the unconscious SIMILE and METAPHOR. OXYMORON realizes that ONOMATOPOEIA is staying behind and grabs ONOMATOPOEIA's arm)

.walk quickly

(ONOMATOPOEIA and OXYMORON hurry away from the training center leaving SIMILE and METAPHOR passed out on the ground.)

SCENE VIII - Out to dinner

(The PUNISHER and ANNA walk into a restaurant and up to the HOSTESS. SIMILE and METAPHOR peeking through the window.)

HOSTESS

Good evening sir. For a party of two there's approximately a twenty minute wait.

PUNISHER

Actually, I have reservation for two under the name Marshall, *Marshall Arts*.
(to ANNA) I'm a *black belt*. *(to HOSTESS)* I know we're late, but I was hoping that our table would still be available after all it's only

ANNA

(ANNA ignores pun, checks watch, interrupts The PUNISHER)
6:06

HOSTESS

You two got here just in time, we only hold tables for ten minutes after the reservation time. Come right this way Mr. Arts and Miss . . .

ANNA

Anna.

(HOSTESS leads ANNA and The PUNISHER to their table. ANNA and the PUNISHER take their seats. HOSTESS hands them each a menu)

HOSTESS

Here are your menus. The specials for the evening are posted on the board *(gestures to board)* Your server will be along in just a moment to take your drink orders. Have a nice dinner.

PUNISHER

I sold that painting I was telling you about; I am Mr. *Arts* after all.

ANNA

(ANNA ignores pun.)
"A car, a man, a Maraca"?

PUNISHER

The people who bought it loved the car in the painting; and I even convinced them that they could *drive* a good bargain.

WAITER

(Walks up to table, makes an unconvincing attempt at a polite laugh)
Can I start you two off with drinks?

ANNA

Pop?

PUNISHER

I'll have the same.

(At a nearby table, JOKE TELLER and CLEARLY NOT LORRAINE are sitting eating dinner and are in the midst of a conversation.)

JOKE TELLER

Work today was a real bust, everything went wrong. But I heard this joke that had me laughing all day.

CLEARLY NOT LORRAINE

Well, what was it?

JOKE TELLER

Well, it starts with this guy named George. George meets and falls in love with a beautiful woman named Lorraine. Since George is madly in love, he asks Lorraine to marry him within only two days of knowing her. Lorraine accepts George's proposal and they become the happiest couple in the world.

CLEARLY NOT LORRAINE

Aw, that's so nice

JOKE TELLER

Whoa, wait. The day after George and Lorraine get engaged George meets a woman named Clearly. She is the smartest, funniest, most beautiful woman in the whole world and he falls in love with her instantly.

CLEARLY NOT LORRAINE

What happens to Lorraine?

JOKE TELLER

Well, George is a man of his word. He knows it would be a terrible thing to leave Lorraine after he just asked her to marry him. So George decides to stay with Lorraine. To make up the fact that he almost left her, George takes Lorraine out sailing. It started out as a fine day on the water but a storm blew in. The sky grew black as night, the waves crashed over the sides of the boat and Lorraine was tossed into the sea. George called out to Lorraine hoping he could rescue her. But he couldn't see her through the darkness.

CLEARLY NOT LORRAINE

This is a joke?

JOKE TELLER

(JOKE TELLER holds up finger in hush gesture to CLEARLY NOT LORRAINE.)
The storm slowly eases, the clouds part in the sky and light spills over George in his boat. George rises to his feet, flings his arms above his head and says, "I can see Clearly now, Lorraine in gone!"
(JOKE TELLER starts laughing hysterically, falling forward and slapping his knee)

PUNISHER

(On hearing the pun, The PUNISHER quickly stands)
I'll be right back.
(PUNISHER gets up and runs to take care of the offending punner. As he rushes off puns erupt throughout the restaurant. "The mushroom says, 'Why not I'm a fun-gi?'," "One hat says to another, 'you stay here, I'll go on a head'", "They gave out dead batteries free of charge", etc.)

(While the PUNISHER is distracted, SIMILE and METAPHOR sneak up behind ANNA grab her arms and cover her mouth.)

METAPHOR

Struggle and your death will hurt more to feel, than his puns do to hear.

(SIMILE throws a slip of paper on the table as SIMILE and METAPHOR drag ANNA away. The PUNISHER walks back to the table and panics when he can't find ANNA. He picks up the note and reads it out loud.)

PUNISHER

Marshall Arts,

We know you are that you are the *Punisher*; and we have taken Anna hostage until you agree to help us take down Merriam-Webster.

Your *Puns* are as useless as wearing snowshoes in a swimming pool!

Your literary arch nemeses,
Simile and Metaphor

(PUNISHER crushes the note in his hand.)

PUNISHER

No one can *compare* to my punning skills! Once I'm through with them, no *like* in the world will be able to save their *ass*.

(The PUNISHER rushes out of the restaurant.)

SCENE IX - Back in the *Punisher's* training center

PUNISHER

Simile and Metaphor have kidnapped Anna. They refuse to release her until I help them defeat Merriam-Webster. But without the dictionary literary superheroes would not exist.

ONOMATOPOEIA

Tic toc! Tic toc!

OXYMORON

(OXYMORON is holding up the ransom note)
.....defensive strike?

PUNISHER

(PUNISHER grabs the note away from OXYMORON)
I know, I know, we have to make a plan, before things get. . .

OXYMORON

..... Pretty Ugly?

PUNISHER

It's time from me to call on my old mentor. *(pause)* We can't wait for the dust to settle, it's now or never, I'm holding on by the skin of my teeth! *CLICHÉ!!!!!!!!!!*

CLICHE

(CLICHÉ bounds on to stage, wearing a classic example of a superhero costume, the spandex, the cape, the boots, the mask, the whole deal)
Down on your luck?

PUNISHER

Simile and Metaphor have taken my girlfriend Anna hostage.

CLICHÉ

That's no skin off my nose, besides all is fair in love and war. . .

PUNISHER

(interrupts)

They refuse to give her back to me until I help them defeat Merriam-Webster!

CLICHÉ

(Gasps)

I'll be a monkey's uncle without Merriam-Webster, we would be dead in the water.

PUNISHER

I know! Cliché I need your help, what should I do?

CLICHE

Don't get all bent out of shape! I've got some time on my hands; it's time to get you ready to play with the big boys.

PUNISHER

You're right! We have to band together to destroy Simile and Metaphor. Onomatopoeia, grab some paper. Oxymoron, find the . . .

OXYMORON

Invisible ink?

CLICHÉ

(to The PUNISHER)

Not the sharpest crayon in the box?

PUNISHER

(Grabs CLICHÉ by the arm, guides to table)

Let's get to work.

(ALL huddle around table and discuss/write rescue plan)

SCENE X - Back in the secret lair of Simile and Metaphor

(SIMILE and METAPHOR wrestle a very uncooperative ANNA into their lair and secure her to a chair. After they have tied ANNA up, SIMILE and METAPHOR take turns slowly pacing around the chair prodding at ANNA while the other tends to other tasks in the lair)

EXPOSITION

(Sneaks on stage, speaks in stage whisper)

Simile and Metaphor have successfully managed to contain Anna in their secret lair. Issuing attempt after attempt to force her to reveal any information they could use to gain the help of the *Punisher*. Little do they know, that with the help of Cliché, the *Punisher*, Oxymoron, and Onomatopoeia are on their way to the secret lair armed with a foolproof plan that will ensure both the safety of Anna and the utter defeat of Simile and Metaphor.

SIMILE

(Has a camera and is snapping pictures of ANNA)

We shall send pictures of you bound in our lair to the *Punisher*. He will help us defeat Merriam-Webster, once we agree to set you free in return.

ANNA

Oh, cameras are macho!

METAPHOR

But to insure that the *Punisher* will help us, you must give us all the information you know about him. We may need more than you to convince the *Punisher* to join our cause. What does he want more than anything in the world?

ANNA

(sarcastically) Is it I? *(sadly whispers)* It is I

SIMILE

Will he arrive like a flash of wind? Or as a squeal of rubber?

ANNA

(muttering)

Race car.

METAPHOR

When do you think the *Punisher* will arrive in our neck of the woods?

ANNA

Noon.

METAPHOR

Which doctor does he go to? (*He whispers to SIMILE*) His medical records will give us the edge to push him to our side.

ANNA

Dr. Awkward.

SIMILE

And his favorite number? (*He whispers to METAPHOR*) I'll bet it's his pin number, we can burn through his bank account as fast as a sloth.

ANNA

I prefer pi.

SIMILE

(*Laughs*)

Well, I think she's given us enough information so the *Punisher* will help us defeat Merriam-Webster!

ANNA

(*very angry*)

I did, did I?

(*pause*)

Dammit, I'm mad!

(*There's a loud noise off stage, ALL turn to the direction the sound comes from*)

SCENE XI - Rescuing Anna

(The PUNISHER tries to kick in the door a few times, fails repeatedly. OXYMORON, head butts the door and it swings open. The PUNISHER and CLICHÉ enter the room first, followed by OXYMORON and ONOMATOPOEIA.)

ONOMATOPOEIA

Bang!

OXYMORON

. head butt *(dazed)*

PUNISHER

It's about time you learned to use your *head*.

(ANNA is still tied to a chair. SIMILE and METAPHOR stand beside her.)

SIMILE

The *Punisher*! Did you follow her scent like the good dog you are?

METAPHOR

Perhaps their love is a rope and he just followed the line?

PUNISHER

(PUNISHER pulls out a gun)

I think it's about time I started calling the *shots* around here!

CLICHÉ

That's the ticket! Give it one hundred and ten percent!

(The PUNISHER then begins to beat up SIMILE and METAPHOR with the gun. ONOMATOPOEIA is narrating the sound effects, "BAM", "WHAP", "THUD", "CLUNK", etc. OXYMORON helps the PUNISHER beat up SIMILE and METAPHOR. CLICHÉ grabs the chair that ANNA is tied to and begins to drag both her and the chair to safety.)

OXYMORON

(wanders away from the fight)

. Almost finished?

CLICHÉ

(Turns Oxymoron around and shove him back towards the fight. CLICHÉ joins in the fight leaving ANNA alone and still tied to her chair.)

Keep your head in the game! Their bark is worse than their bite.

Punisher

(Stands up in the middle of the fight and points to digital clock that displays 11:10)

We're at the *eleventh* hour here . . .

ANNA

(As ANNA struggles to free herself, she notices the giant digital clock on the wall switch from 11:10 to 11:11)

11:11! (yells)

(With a sudden (and impossible looking) burst of strength; ANNA breaks through all the ropes that are binding her. She grabs a lid off the stove and throws it at SIMILE and METAPHOR.)

ANNA

Pot top!

(SIMILE and METAPHOR fall to the ground defeated. ANNA finds rope of the floor of the lair and begins to bind SIMILE and Metaphor together. She throws the ends of the rope to the Punisher.)

Tie it!

PUNISHER

(ties off ends of rope, and is astonished at the sight before his eyes)

Anna?

CLICHÉ

What goes around comes around!

ANNA

Now, Sir a war is won!

(ALL cheer. The PUNISHER and ANNA embrace.)

PUNISHER

Anna? You're the lost literary heroine Palindrome! It seems I have underestimated you, *literally* . . .

(ALL strike superhero pose, lights fade to spot.)

EXPOSITION

(Saunters on stage, gestures to each character as he mentions them.)

What does fate have in store for the Punisher? Will he continue to train Oxymoron and Onomatopoeia? Or will his relationship with Palindrome lead to new literary adventures? Have Simile and Metaphor truly been defeated? Find out next time on the Punisher . . .

THE END

Lyrics to The *Punisher* Theme Song

He's the *Punisher*, the *Punisher*.
He'll *Punish* You!
If you make a pun,
You better start to run,
Or you'll see what he'll do!
Smartasses beware if your comedy impaired . .
He's the *Punisher*, the *Punisher*.
He'll *Punish* You