

As director, your job is not only to helm the vision of the show, but also to assist your actors in developing a bond as an ensemble, introduce them to the world of the play, and guide them to join you in the storytelling process. Below you will find exercises that will help you do just that for the Marvel Spotlight series. For exercises specific to the play you are producing, refer to the back of your playscript.

## COMICS AND CONTEXT

**Use this to:** develop ensemble and teamwork among your cast.

Bring in four or five different newspaper comic strips. Cut each panel into individual pieces and drop them into a paper bag so that you have enough for each of your actors. Ask each actor to select one panel and prompt them to silently locate the rest of their comic's individual pieces and put the story back together. If time allows, actors can create frozen tableaux for each panel within the story to share the plot with the rest of the cast.

**Apply to rehearsal:** by selecting a comic that adds character context and facilitating the optional tableau section of this activity with actors before blocking a scene.

## DEFINING HEROISM

**Use this to:** help ensemble members get to know one another and develop a shared definition of "heroism."

Form two circles with your actors, with the outside circle facing in and the inside circle facing out. Each circle should have the same number of participants, thus creating pairs. If you have an odd number, ask someone on your creative team to participate as well. Give the participants these three prompts surrounding heroism: What qualities do heroes have? Who in your life do you consider a hero? Share a time you did something heroic. Allow each member of the pair one minute to respond to each prompt. After each prompt, direct the outer circle to rotate so that each person is sharing with a new partner. Reflect on this exercise with your cast: What did you learn about your peers? What are the common themes you heard about heroism?

**Apply to rehearsal:** by calling back to the definition of heroism when considering who is the hero in various scenes within the story, both obvious and unexpected.

## UNDERSTANDING MARVEL HERO ARCHETYPES

**Use this to:** explore how character archetypes in comics affect physicality and movement.

Invite each actor to draw one card from a deck of cards without showing it to anyone. That will determine the archetype of their super hero character for this game. Use the following archetype key:

- YOUTH: 2-4
- BRUTE STRENGTH: 5-7
- STEALTH/MYSTERY: 8-9
- GENIUS: 10, Jack
- MYTH/ROYALTY/HIGH STATUS: Queen, King
- LEADER: Ace

If helpful, briefly review the six archetypes and corresponding super hero examples. Next, instruct the actors to move freely about the space, encouraging them to walk as they typically would. After the group has settled into a comfortable pace, ask participants to adjust their movement according to the archetype found on their card. Side coach them to interact with the other characters in the room using the following questions: What qualities of your assigned archetype can you represent with your body? What do you notice about other actors' movement and levels? What information does this give you about your archetype and your relationships with other actors?

**Apply to rehearsal:** by repeating this activity prior to scene work, with the actors in-role as the archetypes of their characters.