

YES, YOU MAY USE OUR STAPLER
a short play by
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The curtain rises to reveal a very faintly-lit SIPB office, at a point in the fairly distant future. We can barely make out the contents of the room, but dust and cobwebs are everywhere, thickly covering the computers. Rats scurry across the ground.

Two flashlights begins to shine offstage, and we hear a man trying to open the door, unsuccessfully. Frustrated, he gives up and kicks it down. EDWARD, a British thirty-something with black moustache, steps into the office and wipes off his slightly balding forehead with a silk handkerchief. CRAIG, twentyish with sandy-blonde hair, steps in behind him, carrying much of the equipment.

EDWARD

My God. . . we may have done it! Just wait till the boys back home hear about this one.

CRAIG

What is this place?

EDWARD pulls out a tiny brush and begins dusting off the surfaces near him.

EDWARD

Have you ever heard of SIPB?

CRAIG

Sip-bee?

EDWARD

It's fine, few archaeologists have. In fact, many of my colleagues believe that it is just a myth.

CRAIG

What do you mean?

EDWARD

Well, no one agrees on the precise details, but the story goes something like this: SIPB was an exclusive and mysterious cult, for lack of a better word. They seemed to worship something called "Athena."

CRAIG

The Greek goddess?

EDWARD

That's what we thought, too, for many years, but that doesn't seem to be it. It was something else — something so incredibly complicated that only a select few could truly understand it. And those that did kept it secret. We only know that stapler-worship and gratis staple-distribution played a central role in their activities.

CRAIG

They gave away staples? My God!

EDWARD

It's incredible, I know, but you must remember that this was before the Great Wars — metal was still widely available.

CRAIG

I see... What does SIPB stand for, anyway?

EDWARD

We do not know what the letters "SIPB" originally stood for, but near the end of SIPB's existence, we know that they stood for, "Staples instead of projects, boo-ya!"

CRAIG

Strange... What makes this place so special? What are we looking for?

EDWARD

Well, you see, initially, SIPB was responsible for helping to maintain some primitive computing devices — basically advanced abacuses — for a particular mental institution in Massachusetts. The book of zephyr tells of their many feats.

The SIPB was rumored to have an incredible technical library — a veritable Lighthouse of Alexandria, but much of it was claimed in a natural disaster. My fellow archaeologists at Oxford have shown me some of the surviving writings telling of Mr. ANSI's voyages across some sort of sea, and...

CRAIG

Wait, I think I've found something.

CRAIG finishes brushing off surface and pulls out a sheet of paper.

EDWARD

Be careful with that! What does it say?

CRAIG

I don't know, I can barely read it. It is in a fixed-width sans-hyper-serif font. Blast this primitive typesetting!

EDWARD

(taking paper from CRAIG)

Hmm. . . it appears to be a document from the reign of a certain "jbarnold," before the War.

EDWARD mutters to himself while reading it.

EDWARD

Something about `scripts.mit.edu`?

CRAIG

What is that?

EDWARD

That was a code word for some kind of world domination plan. They were well on their way to succeed, until their conflict with a certain movie club, LSC.

CRAIG gives EDWARD a strange look.

EDWARD

It's a long story, but the short version is that SIPB's more sophisticated weaponry allowed them to win the war. We've heard rumors of a weapon that could puncture 10 to 60 armored vehicles, in one shot. SIPB went on to play a larger role in global politics, but the war destroyed much of their infrastructure, and they were unable to complete their plans of world domination.

EDWARD trails off distractedly as an object in the back sparkles and grabs his eye. He begins to move towards it.

CRAIG

What, what is that?

EDWARD
(*excitedly*)

Could this be it?

EDWARD *unearths the "Save in Case of Fire" box.*

EDWARD

My God, it is! So the legends are true!

CRAIG

What?

EDWARD

In the course of their worship, the SIPBians placed all their important documents in a tabernacle, of sorts. They called it the "Save in Case of Nuclear Holocaust" box. We seek the most precious relic therein.

CRAIG

What is it?!?

EDWARD

The back of SIPB's copy of the first "multics" login secretly contains a hidden treasure map!

CRAIG

My God! Just like the US Declaration of Independence!

EDWARD

Yes, indeed. The world's governments are completely unprepared for the treasures that we will be able to find using this map.

EDWARD *begins fishing around in the box, looking for the document, his back to CRAIG. While EDWARD is not watching, CRAIG pulls a stapler from out of his pocket and holds it at the ready.*

EDWARD
(*pulling out document*)

Craig, come over here, I think I've found—

CRAIG *holds the stapler to the back of EDWARD's head.*

EDWARD

Craig? What is going on? What's that? A stapler?

CRAIG

Give me the sacred scroll of multics.

EDWARD

What? Have you gone mad?

CRAIG

I said, give it to me!

EDWARD

But, Craig, do you realize what we can do with this?

CRAIG

Oh, I realize. What you don't realize is that I am, in fact, a SIPB member. Charged with protecting the Office, we have been guarding these documents for centuries, ensuring that they do not fall into the wrong hands. I'm afraid I can't let you leave with any of it.

EDWARD spins around, and attempts to knock the stapler out of CRAIG's hand, but he is too late. CRAIG fires, and EDWARD falls to the ground. CRAIG takes the document from out of his hands, places the stapler neatly back on the table, and begins to leave.

CRAIG

Yes, you may use our stapler.

The End