

Platinum Phantom #1

By Darren J Seeley

FADE IN:

INT. SCHOOL ROOM - DAY

A film projector runs before a group of unseen, but heard audience of pre-teen kids.

Black screen. Dust, scratches on the 16 millimeter film. The footage flashes a hypnotic strobe beat...a kaleidoscope of colors. The wall-clock's hands move quickly from 1:30 to 1:45.

The faces of the mannequin children watch as the presentation ends. The reel's film feed end slaps around in a spin cycle.

Seated in the far back of the row, JOE (13) looks up from his comic book. Joe jolts up from his seat, gazes over the plastic, expressionless faces of his classmates - all of them the same.

Joe glances to the teacher's desk. The nameplate on the desk reads MRS. GRENDEKO and she is a splitting image of a department store mannequin.

Joe backs up, afraid. Bumps into his own desk. His papers, pencil and comic book splatter to the floor. His eyes dart right to them.

In between the comics pages, a large upper right panel displays a figure with a big, dark tweed coat, white eye mask and brim hat. The hero's caption reads "I must stop the Psychobrain!"

Joe bends down, picks up the comic. On the cover - *The Platinum Phantom*- "*Fabulous FIRST issue!*". Tucks it under his arm.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Joe strolls on by a random mannequin. He stops, does a double-take. His demeanor changes. A sinister grin creeps over his face as he swats the dummy in the shoulder with his comic book.

JOE

Flies are on you! Hornets!

Stuffs the comic under his arm, comes up closer to the Alex mannequin. Digs in Alex mannequin's jacket pockets. Pulls out a roll of gum, a wadded up dollar and two quarters.

Stuffs the money in his pants pocket. Considers the gum. Rips off part of the wrapper and plops a stick in his mouth. Smiles as he chews and chews.

JOE

Oh, yeah, big bad dude now...

Blows a bubble, lets it pop. Takes the gum out of his mouth. Places the slimy mass on Alex mannequin's shirt.

PLATINUM PHANTOM (O.S.)

Hey, kid!

Joe whirls about, sees a figure down the long hallway, dressed like the comic book character The Platinum Phantom.

Platinum Phantom marches towards Joe. Joe backs up a step, dumbfounded. He scrambles back to his comic book, slips it out of the cover. Looks back at the approaching figure, now in front of him.

JOE

Can't be.

Joe glances down, flips pages. His eyes widen, as artwork panels reveal his discovery of the room of kid mannequins, his revenge on the Alex mannequin.

The last panel has Platinum Phantom saying the quote from a moment ago. The Next page has empty artwork. An image fades on the first panel...

JOE

This is wicked.

PLATINUM PHANTOM

Wicked... Who's this?

Thumbs to Alex.

JOE

School bully. Shakes me down for my lunch money. Just a little payback.

PLATINUM PHANTOM

Getting what was taken from you is one thing. Revenge is another.

JOE

I'm not a bad kid - I get good grades!

PLATINUM PHANTOM

I know. If you were, you would have jammed it up his... never mind. It's not important. What is -

JOE

Cool! You going to save the world?

PLATINUM PHANTOM

Yes! And you're going to help!

JOE

Awesome! What do I have to do?

PLATINUM PHANTOM

That document opens a dimensional portal between two dimensions.

JOE

The comic book?

PLATINUM PHANTOM

A criminal known as Psychobrain constructed a device which created that...comic book and swapped everyone in this school with crash test dummies and mannequins.

JOE

How come?

PLATINUM PHANTOM

Because that's how a twisted mind works. He made a ransom demand to the city, I came to stop him. I was about to find him...now I'm here.

Joe scuffles away.

PLATINUM PHANTOM

Where are you going?

JOE

I need a drink.

Platinum Phantom frowns, follows Joe. They head straight to a pop machine. Joe fishes for his change.

JOE

Think I have enough.

Plops in the coins, makes a selection.

PLATINUM PHANTOM

The fate of the world is at risk
and all you want is a root beer?

JOE

If it was the end of the world,
wouldn't you just want to have a
root beer?

PLATINUM PHANTOM

I'd try to save -- what kind of a
question is that?

JOE

And is it really the end of the
world? No more bullies! No more
cardboard pizza for lunch! No more
homework!

Toasts the Platinum Phantom.

JOE

Freedom is a root beer.

Platinum Phantom gives Joe a shocked look.

JOE

Plat, you're asking the wrong
questions.

PLATINUM PHANTOM

You lost me kid.

Joe hands him the comic.

JOE

Take a look.

Platinum Phantom thumbs through it. Does a double take.

JOE

Find any bad guys? No? Why is that?
Psychobrain's got to be around
here, but you never met
Psychobrain.

PLATINUM PHANTOM

Impossible!

JOE

Is it, Plat? That out of all the
kids in school, the most gifted
student -me - is the only one
unaffected by this dastardly plan?

Platinum Phantom goes to beginning of the comic. As he reads, Platinum Phantom grits his teeth.

JOE

That's right. You never left your dimension. I left mine. The dummy army was never sent.

Platinum Phantom looks Joe in the eyes. Not pleased.

JOE

Everyone from my side is alive and well. World's fine. Both of them.

PLATINUM PHANTOM

Your parents! What about them!

JOE

Relax, Plat. In comics, nobody ages. Besides, I really didn't do anything really evil -

PLATINUM PHANTOM

Still wrong. Unethical.

JOE

Apples and oranges. We need to come up with a new name for me, seeing how I'm your new sidekick.

PLATINUM PHANTOM

Sidekick?

JOE

Hey, that could work. A little lame, but I don't think it's taken. I got to learn some ground and pound, stuff like that.

PLATINUM PHANTOM

I am not calling you "Sidekick". You're right. It is lame.

JOE

You'll get over it. Just call me...

FADE OUT