Section 14
Plays, Cartoons, and Graphic Novels

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14.1 Fundamentals

14.1.1 This section deals with plays and other print situations that involve dialogue. Cartoons, interviews, and graphic novels also use a dialogue or a question-and-answer format that works well with the patterns established in this section.

14.1.2 Follow print for capitalization on speaker names, character names, and abbreviated names. The names may appear as the speaker in stage settings, stage directions, etc.

14.1.3 Retain font attributes on speaker, character, and abbreviated names.

14.1.4 If print uses both full capitalization *and* emphasis to show speaker names, retain the capitalization and omit the emphasis.

14.1.5 Retain font attributes when emphasis is required grammatically, e.g., book titles, ship titles, etc.

14.1.6 Dialogue starts on the same braille line as the character's name or identity when space permits.

14.1.7 When there is an extended blank space between the speaker's name and the first word of the speech, this space is indicated by three blank cells in braille. A transcriber's note is required to explain this format. See *Formats*, §15, Line-Numbered and Line-Lettered Text for plays with line numbers. (See also *Formats*, §16, Notes.)

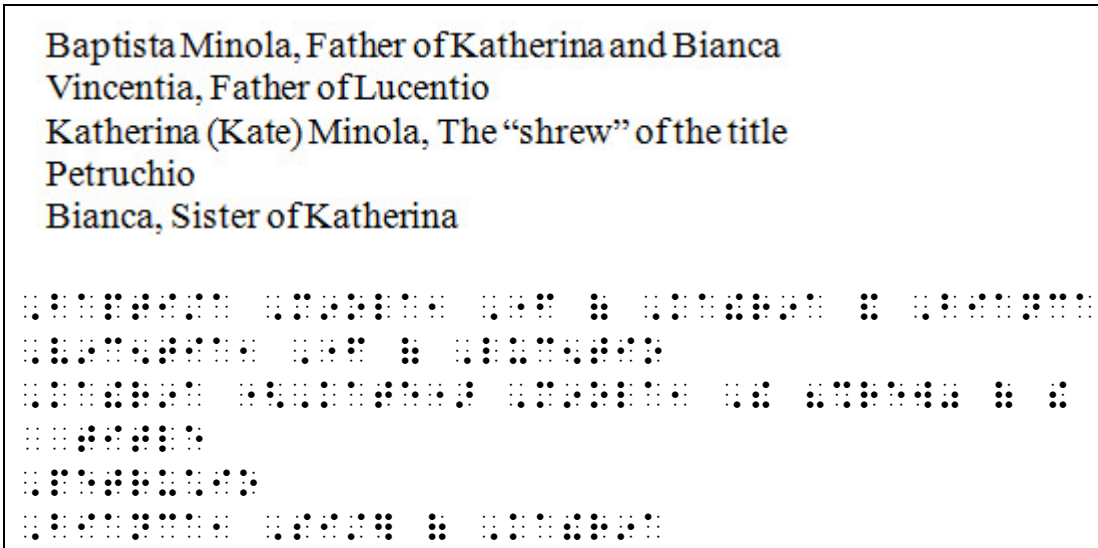
14.2 Cast of Characters

14.2.1 The following format is used for the cast of characters:

a. Use a cell-5 heading when a heading is included.
b. Use 1-3 margins for the cast of characters, with each name followed on the same line by the character identification.
c. Retain font attributes on speaker names; omit font attributes on speaker identifications.
d. Follow print punctuation used to separate names from any following identifications. **Note:** Do not insert punctuation that does not appear in print.

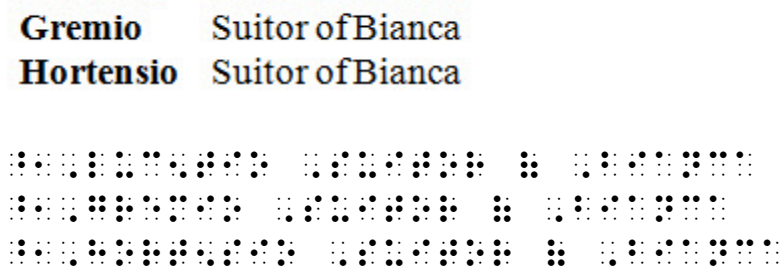
Example 14-1: Simple Cast of Characters

Baptista Minola, Father of Katherina and Bianca
Vincentia, Father of Lucentio
Katherina (Kate) Minola, The "shrew" of the title
Petruchio
Bianca, Sister of Katherina



Example 14-2: Cast of Characters with Fonts

Lucentio Suitor of Bianca
Gremio Suitor of Bianca
Hortensio Suitor of Bianca



(See Sample 14-1: Cast of Characters on page 14-12.)

14.2.2 When a play is longer than a single volume:

a. Repeat the cast of characters in each volume of the continued play.
b. Include the repeated cast of characters in print page number order in the front matter pages.
c. Include the print page number on the front matter page.
d. Include the transposed print page numbers for the repeated cast of characters on the title page. For example, if page 60 is the print page number for the cast of characters:

Title page: Print pages 5, 60, 80-95

14.3 Scene Settings

14.3.1 Scene settings may be described by a single word or several paragraphs, identifying the locale or period in which the action takes place.

a. Titles and scene numbers are centered headings.
b. Follow print for blocked or indented paragraphs.
c. Follow print for use of enclosure symbols, e.g., brackets or parentheses. Do not add enclosure symbols if none are used in print.
d. Omit font attributes unless needed for distinction.
e. Insert a blank line to separate scene settings from dialogue.

(See Sample 14-2: Scene Setting on page 14-13.)

14.4 Stage Directions

14.4.1 A stage direction is an instruction to the actor that is written into the script of the play.

a. Follow print for enclosure symbols used for internal stage directions. Do not add enclosure symbols if none are used in print.
b. Follow print placement and punctuation when stage directions or cues follow the speaker's name.

Example 14-3: Stage Directions After a Speaker's Name

Anne. [laughing] Isn't that a beautiful balloon?

c. Ignore font attributes used for stage directions, unless needed for distinction, e.g., when stage directions after a speaker's name are not enclosed in punctuation. If text within stage directions requires emphasis for distinction, use the typeform indicator that best represents print emphasis of surrounding text.

Example 14-4: Italics Retained for Unenclosed Stage Directions

MAMA *hysterically*: But I can't do anything about that!
JESSIE *quietly*: No. You can't.

Example 14-5: Stage Directions within Dialogue

John (*into phone*): I can't talk now. (*Pause*) What? (*Pause*) Hmm. (*Pause*) All right, I … I. Can't. Talk. Now. No, no, no. I *Know* I did, but …. What? Hello. What? She *what?* She *can't*, she said the agreement is void? …

14.5 Prose Plays

14.5.1 Speakers and Dialogue

a. Use 1-3 margins for each speaker's name and accompanying dialogue.

b. Follow print for capitalization and emphasis. If print uses both full capitalization *and* emphasis to show speaker names, retain the capitalization and omit the emphasis.
c. Follow print for punctuation shown after the name of each speaker.
d. Insert two blank spaces between speaker names and dialogue if print shows no distinction between the names and the dialogue, e.g., emphasis on the names; punctuation between the names and related dialog. (See Sample 14-3: Dialogue on page 14-14.)
e. Use 5-3 margins for additional paragraphs by the same speaker in the same dialogue. (See Sample 14-4: Speaker with Multiple Paragraphs of Dialogue on page 14-15.)

14.5.2 Simultaneous Speakers

a. Ignore enclosure symbols when they are used to indicate that two or more characters are speaking at the same time with different dialogue. Precede the simultaneous speeches with a transcriber's note. Sample:

Martha and Peter together

b. Indicate the resumption of normal dialogue by the following transcriber's note. Do not insert a blank line before or after the transcriber's note. Sample:

Solo

(See Sample 14-5: Simultaneous Speakers on page 14-16.)

c. Do not attempt to duplicate print when dialogue of simultaneous speakers is printed in columns. Use the dialogue format as directed above. (See Sample 14-6: Columned Dialogue Ignored on page 14-17.)

14.5.3 Stage Directions between Lines of Prose Dialogue

a. Use 7-7 margins for stage directions or cues.
b. Use 9-7 margins for additional paragraphs of stage directions.
c. Ignore font attributes used for stage directions.

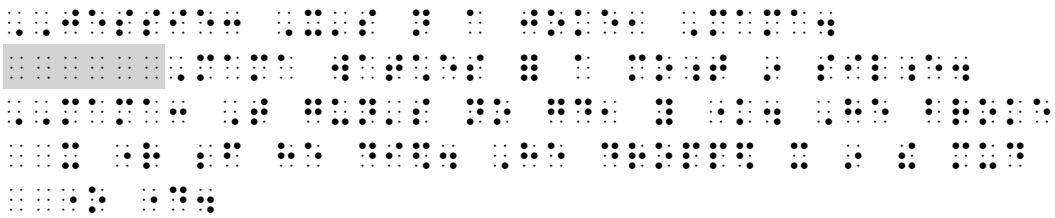
d. Do not insert blank lines before or after stage directions or cues printed outside or between the lines of dialogue.

Example 14-6: Unenclosed Stage Directions

JESSIE: It's not a joke, Mama.

Mama watches for a moment in silence.

MAMA: That gun's no good, you know. He broke it right before he died. He dropped it in the mud one day.



(See Sample 14-7: Two Paragraphs of Prose Stage Directions on page 14-18.)

14.6 Verse Plays

14.6.1 Verse plays are written in a poetic form and typically each line begins with a capital letter.

a. Use 1-5 margins for the first line of dialogue.
b. Use 3-5 margins for additional lines by the same speaker.
c. Follow print for capitalization and emphasis. If print uses both full capitalization *and* emphasis to show speaker names, retain the capitalization and omit the emphasis.
d. Follow print for punctuation shown after the name of each speaker.
e. Insert two blank spaces between speaker names and dialogue if print shows no distinction between the names and the dialogue, e.g. emphasis on the names; punctuation between the names and related dialog.

(See Sample 14-8: Verse Play on page 14-19.)

14.6.2 When print includes a large space after a speaker's name:

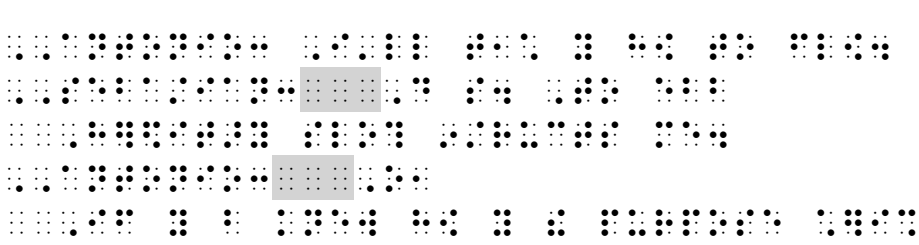
a. Insert three blank cells between the speaker's name and the beginning of the dialogue.

b. Explain this usage on the Transcriber's Notes page, or in a transcriber's note before the beginning of the play. Sample:

> Three blank cells have been inserted when print shows a wide space following a speaker's name.

Example 14-7: Verse Play with Extended Blank Space

ANTONIO: I'll teach you how to flow.
SEBASTIAN: Do so. To ebb
Hereditary sloth instructs me.
ANTONIO: O,
If you but knew how you the purpose cherish



14.6.3 Stage Directions between Lines of Verse Dialogue

a. Use 7-7 margins for stage directions or cues.
b. Use 9-7 margins for additional paragraphs of stage directions.

Example 14-8: Two Paragraphs of Verse Stage Directions

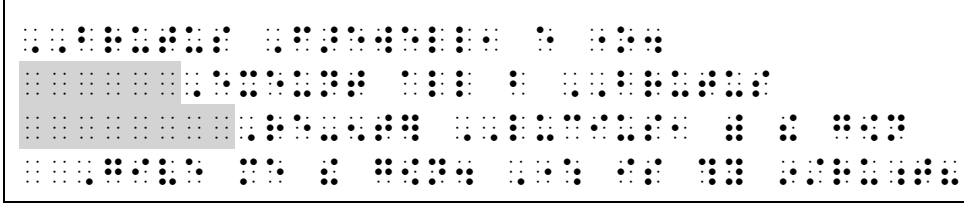
BRUTUS

Farewell, every one.

Exeunt all but BRUTUS

Re-enter LUCIUS, with the gown

Give me the gown. Where is thy instrument?



14.7 Mixed Prose and Verse Plays

14.7.1 **Dialogue.** Use the appropriate format for the type of dialogue, i.e., 1-3 margins for the prose sections and 1-5, 3-5 margins for the verse sections.

14.7.2 **Stage Directions.** Use 7-7 margins for stage directions or cues. Follow print for use of enclosure symbols. (See Sample 14-9: Mixed Prose and Verse Stage Directions on page 14-20.)

14.8 Conclusion of Play

14.8.1 A phrase indicating the conclusion of the play (e.g., “The End” or “The Curtain Falls,” etc.) is centered and preceded and followed by a blank line.

14.8.2 Do not add “The End” or other indication of the play’s end when none appears in print.

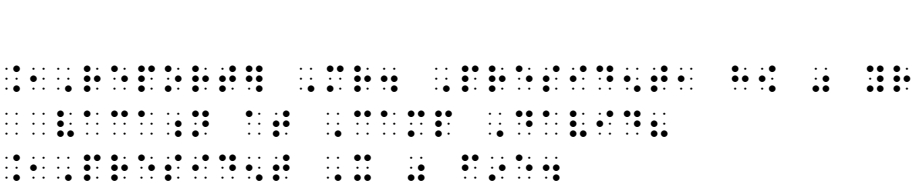
(See Sample 14-10: Conclusion of Play on page 14-21.)

14.9 Interviews

14.9.1 Use the prose play format (1-3 margins) for interviews. (See *Formats*, §14.4.)

Example 14-9: Interview

Reporter Mr. President, how was your vacation at Camp David?
President It was fine.



14.10 Cartoons

14.10.1 Insert a blank line before and after a cartoon. Do not leave blank lines between the frames or panels of a single cartoon or between individual cartoons when a series of them is shown.

14.10.2 Insert the word “Cartoon,” enclosed in transcriber’s notes symbols. Use 7-5 margins. Continuing on the same line, insert the cartoon title and artist’s name, followed by the

date and copyright information, if given and legible. Copyright information is often found in the acknowledgements if part of this information attached to the cartoon is difficult to read.

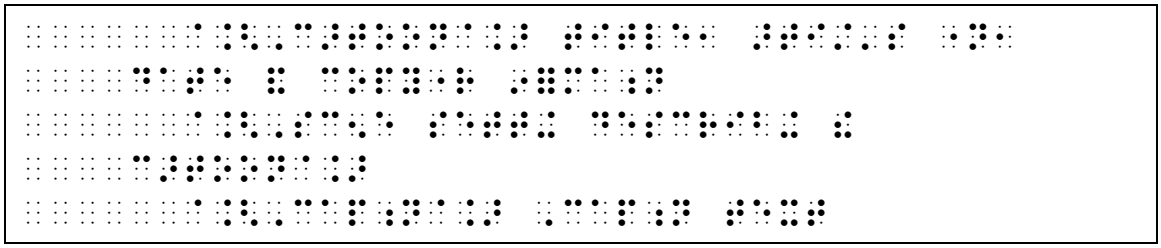
14.10.3 Format cartoons using the following general guidelines.

a. It is often useful to insert a brief scene setting describing the cartoon and the characters before beginning the cartoon. Include this in a transcriber's note, starting on the line after the cartoon and title information.
b. Use 1-3 margins for dialogue.
c. Insert two blank spaces between speaker names and dialogue if print shows no distinction between the names and the dialogue, e.g. emphasis on the names; punctuation between the names and related dialog.

14.10.4 **Single-Frame Cartoon.** Dialogue is frequently not included in a single-frame cartoon. Include sufficient information in a scene setting to convey the intent of the cartoon.

a. Describe the scene setting in a transcriber's note using 7-5 margins.
b. Use 7-5 margins for the caption to the cartoon.

Example 14-10: Elements of Single-Frame Cartoon



14.10.5 **Multi-Frame Cartoon.** A cartoon may have a series of frames. Enclose each frame number in transcriber's note indicators using 7-5 margins.

a. Using 1-3 margins, begin dialogue with the character's name followed by two spaces.
b. Use initial capitalization when dialogue is printed in all capital letters.
c. When the dialogue is continued in another frame, repeat the character's name, followed by a colon.

d. When a character is not identified, an identifying trait is used as the character name, e.g., Boy 1, Boy 2, Man with Hat, etc.
e. Give dialogue from an unknown character an identifier, such as “Narrator” or “Unseen Character.”
f. If necessary, a brief description of the action in the frame is enclosed in the transcriber’s note with the frame number. If the action relates only to a specific character, insert a transcriber’s note following the character’s name. This description need not be limited to seven words.
g. Look at the entire cartoon, graphic novel, etc., before writing the description.

(See Sample 14-11: Cartoon on page 14-22.)

14.11 Graphic Novels

14.11.1 Graphic novels use comic book style art and dialogue. They are treated as a multi-frame cartoon, with each print page beginning with Frame 1.

a. Narrative boxes use 1-3 margins.
b. If the narrative box appears within a frame, insert the text from the narrative into that frame. If the narrative box is outside one of the frames, treat it as a separate frame and follow the guidelines for formatting frames.

(See Sample 14-12: Graphic Novel on page 14-24.)

14.12 Samples

Sample 14-1: Cast of Characters, page 14-12
Sample 14-2: Scene Setting, page 14-13
Sample 14-3: Dialogue, page 14-14
Sample 14-4: Speaker with Multiple Paragraphs of Dialogue, page 14-15
Sample 14-5: Simultaneous Speakers, page 14-16
Sample 14-6: Columned Dialogue Ignored, page 14-17
Sample 14-7: Two Paragraphs of Prose Stage Directions, page 14-18
Sample 14-8: Verse Play, page 14-19
Sample 14-9: Mixed Prose and Verse Stage Directions, page 14-20
Sample 14-10: Conclusion of Play, page 14-21
Sample 14-11: Cartoon, page 14-22
Sample 14-12: Graphic Novel, page 14-24

Sample 14-1: Cast of Characters

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

CLAUDIUS, *King of Denmark*
HAMLET, *son to the late King Hamlet and nephew to the present king*
POLONIUS, *lord chamberlain*
HORATIO, *friend to Hamlet*
LAERTES, *son to Polonius*
VOLTIMAND, *courtier*
CORNELIUS, "
ROSENCRANTZ, "
GUILDENSTERN, "
OSRIC, "
A GENTLEMAN

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Sample 14-2: Scene Setting

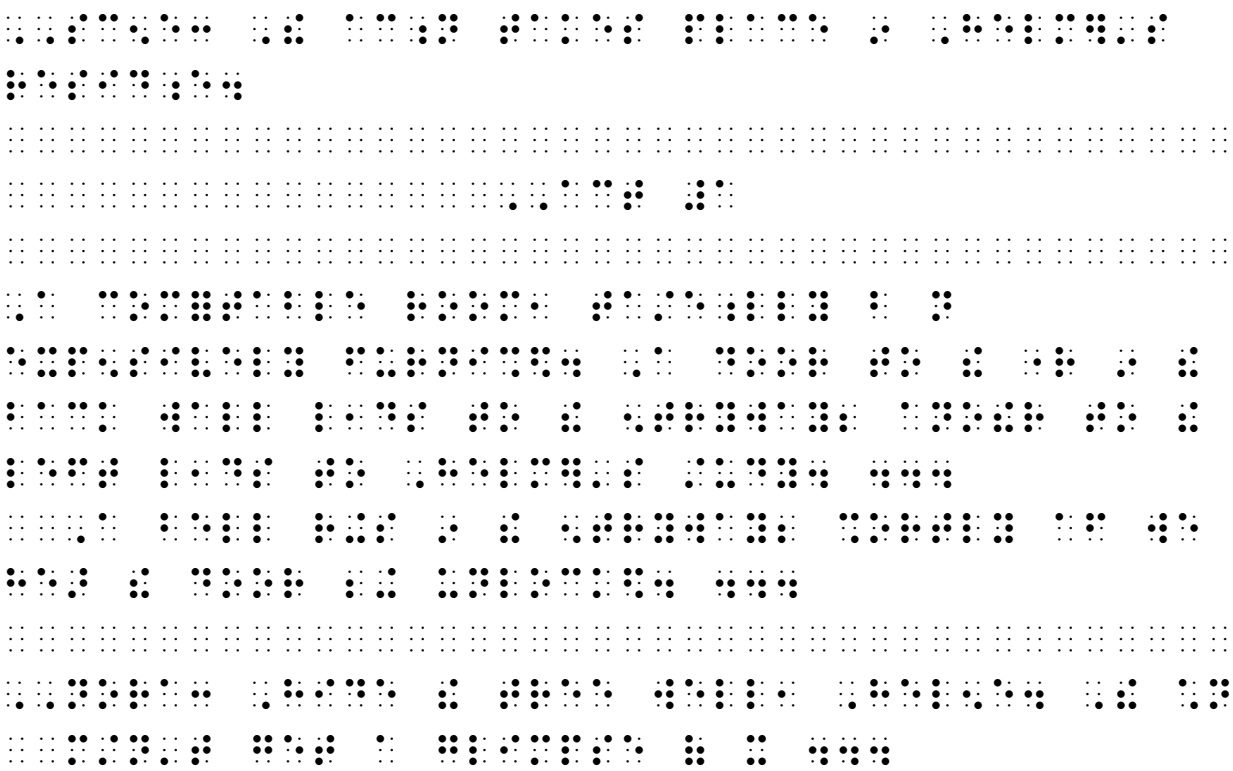
SCENE: *The action takes place in Helmer's residence.*

ACT 1

A comfortable room, tastefully but not expensively furnished. A door to the right in the back wall leads to the entryway; another to the left leads to Helmer's study. ...

A bell rings in the entryway; shortly after we hear the door being unlocked. ...

NORA: Hide the tree well, Helene. The children mustn't get a glimpse of it



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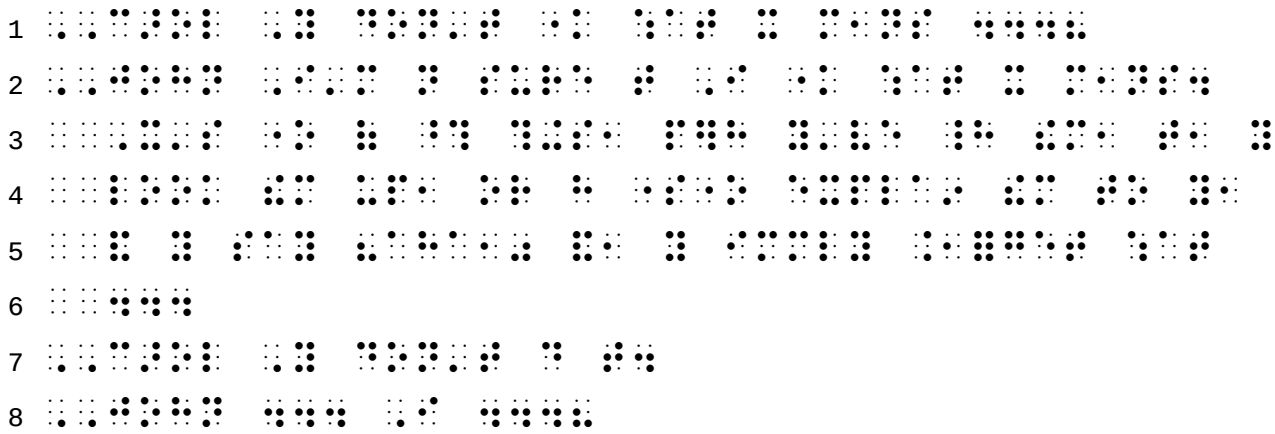
Sample 14-3: Dialogue

CAROL You don't know what it means …?

JOHN I'm not sure that I know what it means. It's one of those things, perhaps you've had them, that, you look them up, or have someone explain them to you, and you say "aha," and, you immediately *forget* what …

CAROL You don't do that.

JOHN … I …?



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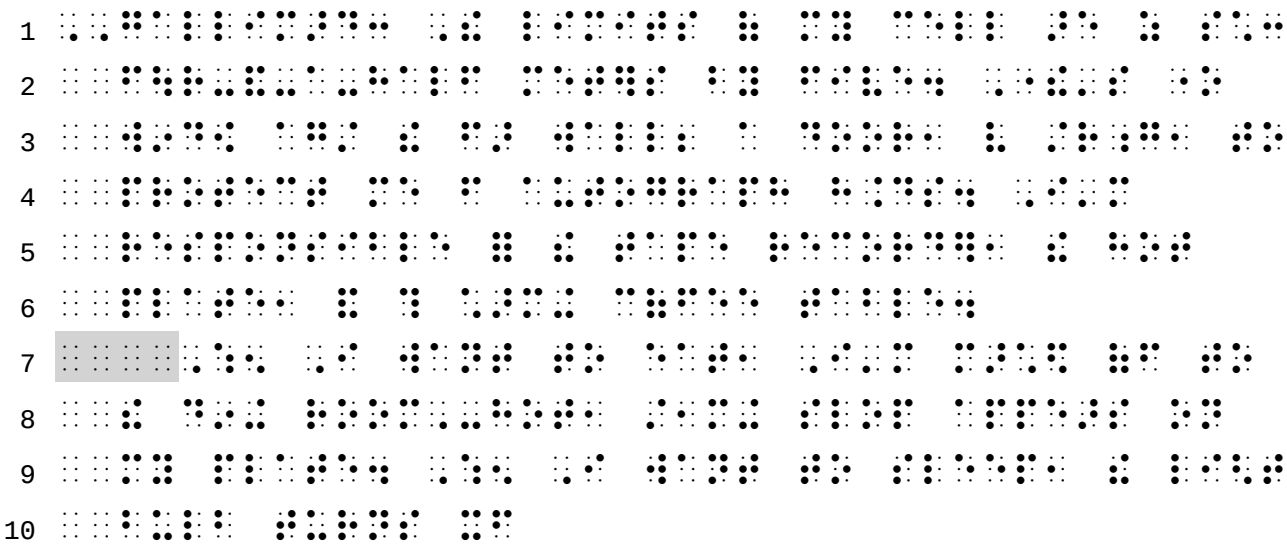
Sample 14-4: Speaker with Multiple Paragraphs of Dialogue

GALLIMARD: The limits of my cell are as such: four-and-a-half meters by five. There' s one window against the far wall; a door, very strong, to protect me from autograph hounds. I'm responsible for the tape recorder, the hot plate, and this charming coffee table.

When I want to eat, I'm marched off to the dining room—hot, steaming slop appears on my plate. When I want to sleep, the light bulb turns itself



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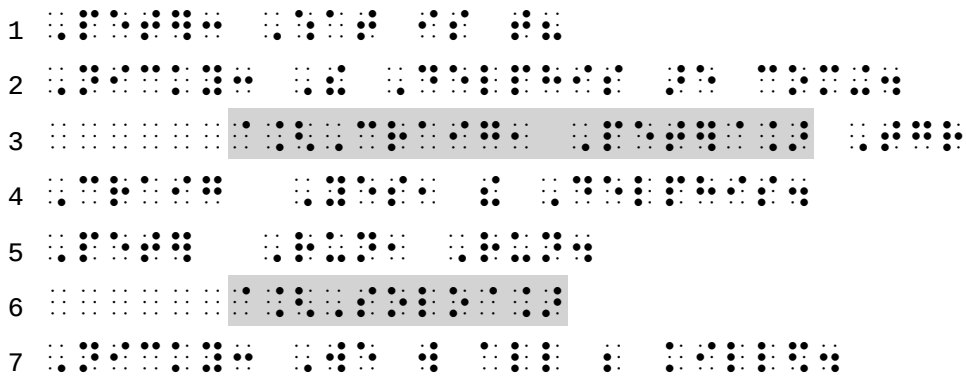
Sample 14-5: Simultaneous Speakers

Peter: What is that?
Nicky: The Delphis are coming.
Craig } *Together* Yes, the Delphis.
Peter } Run, Run.
Nicky: We will all be killed.



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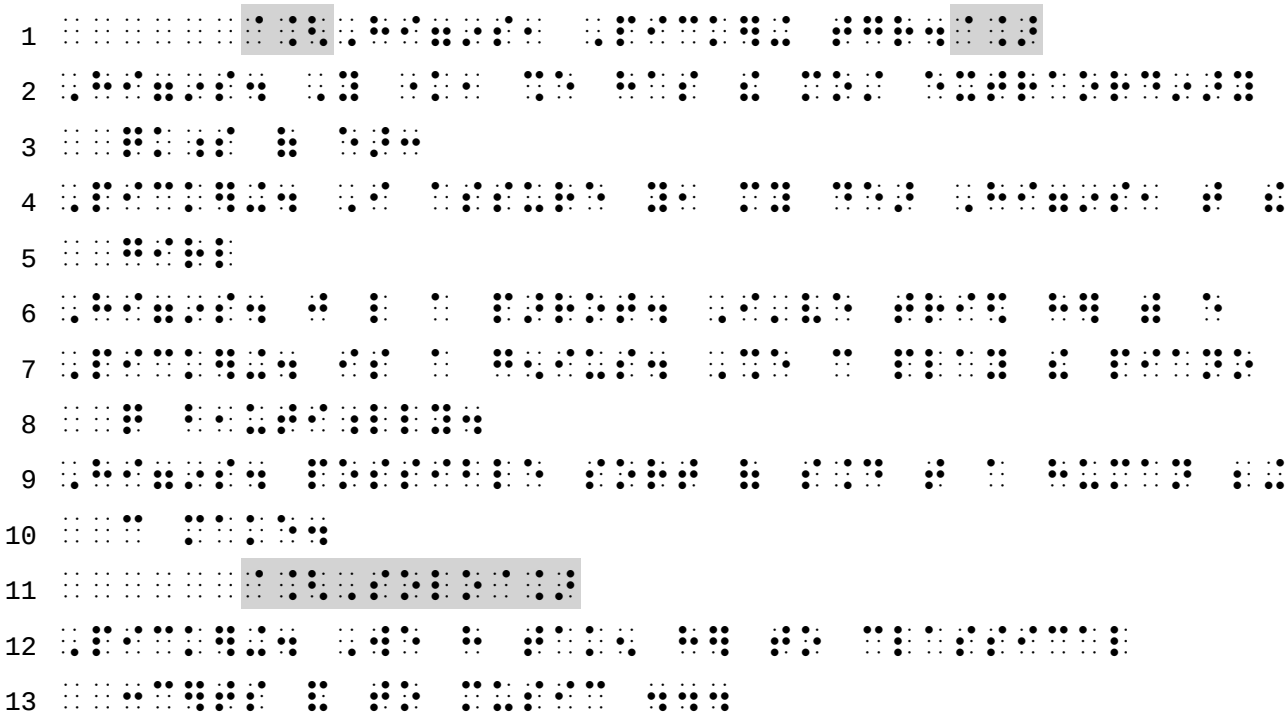
Sample 14-6: Columned Dialogue Ignored

Higgins.	You know, she has the most extraordinary quickness of ear:
Pickering.	I assure you, my dear Higgins, that the girl
Higgins.	just like a parrot. I've tried her with every
Pickering.	is a genius. She can play the piano quite beautifully.
Higgins.	possible sort of sound that a human being can make.
Pickering.	We have taken her to classical concerts and to music …



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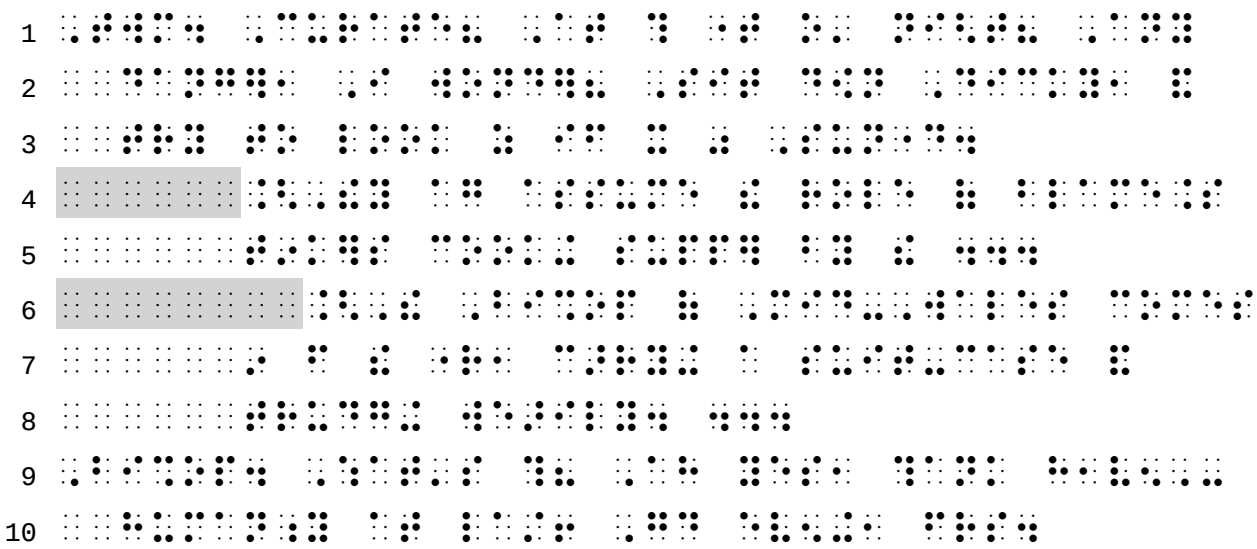
Sample 14-7: Two Paragraphs of Prose Stage Directions

TWM. Curate? At this time o' night? Any danger, I wonder? Sit down Dicky, and try to look as if it was Sunday.

[They again assume the role of blameless tinkers cooking supper by the roadside. To meet the special occasion, Twm begins to hum a Welsh hymn-tune, with which he is but loosely acquainted. Dicky joins in.

[The Bishop of Mid-Wales comes in from the right, carrying a suit-case and trudging wearily. He is dressed in episcopal attire, his gaiters being stained with dust. He is a benign, white-haired old gentleman of a very friendly disposition. For a moment he pauses, blinking through and over his glasses in the manner of a very short-sighted person.

BISHOP. What's this? Ah yes, thank heaven—humanity at last! Good evening, friends.



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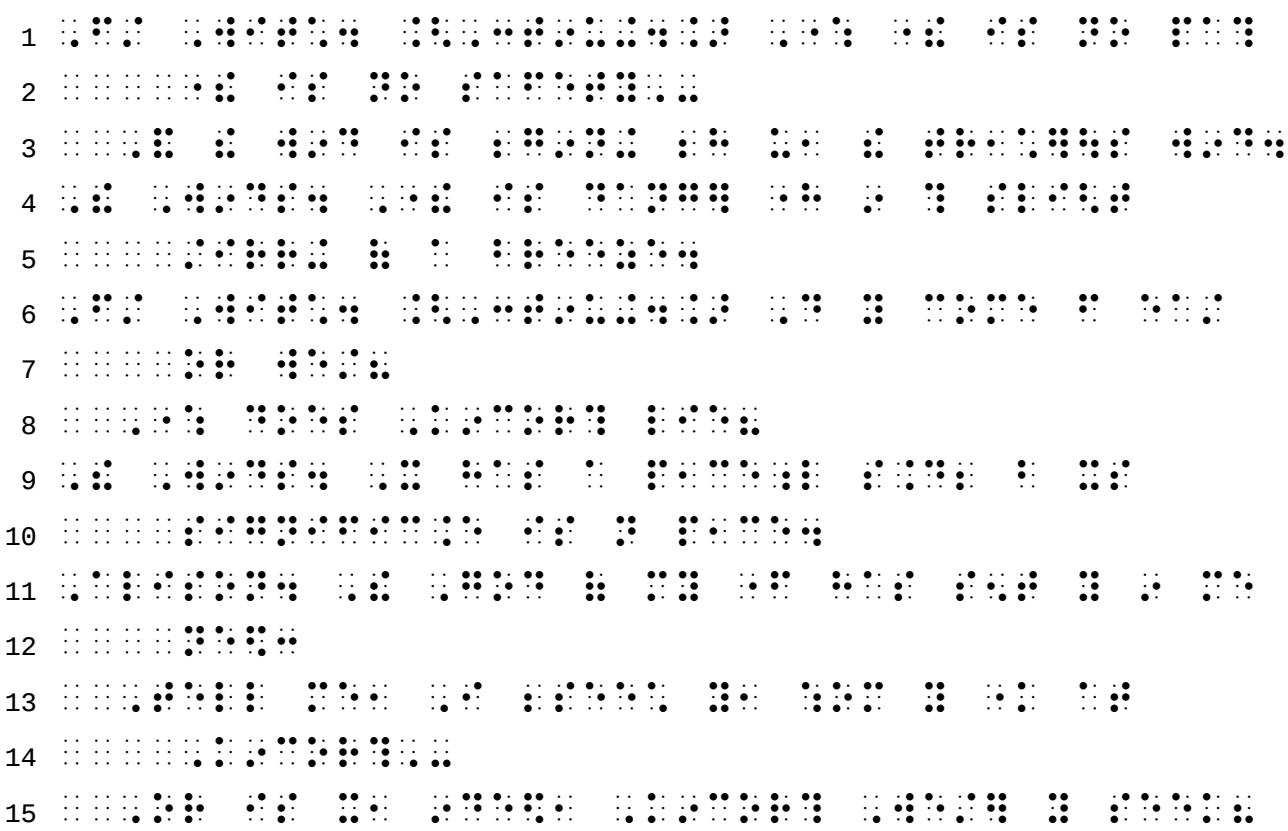
Sample 14-8: Verse Play

FIRST WITCH. [*Continuing.*] Where there is no path there is no safety—
And the wind is beginning behind us, the treacherous wind.
THE WINDS. There is danger here in this slight stirring of a breeze.
FIRST WITCH. [*Continuing.*] Do you come from east or west?
Where does Kincorth lie?
THE WINDS. It has a peaceful sound; but its significance is not peace.
ALISON. The God of my father has sent you in me need:
Tell me, I beseech you, whom you know at Kincorth—
Or is it, indeed, Kincorth Wester you seek?



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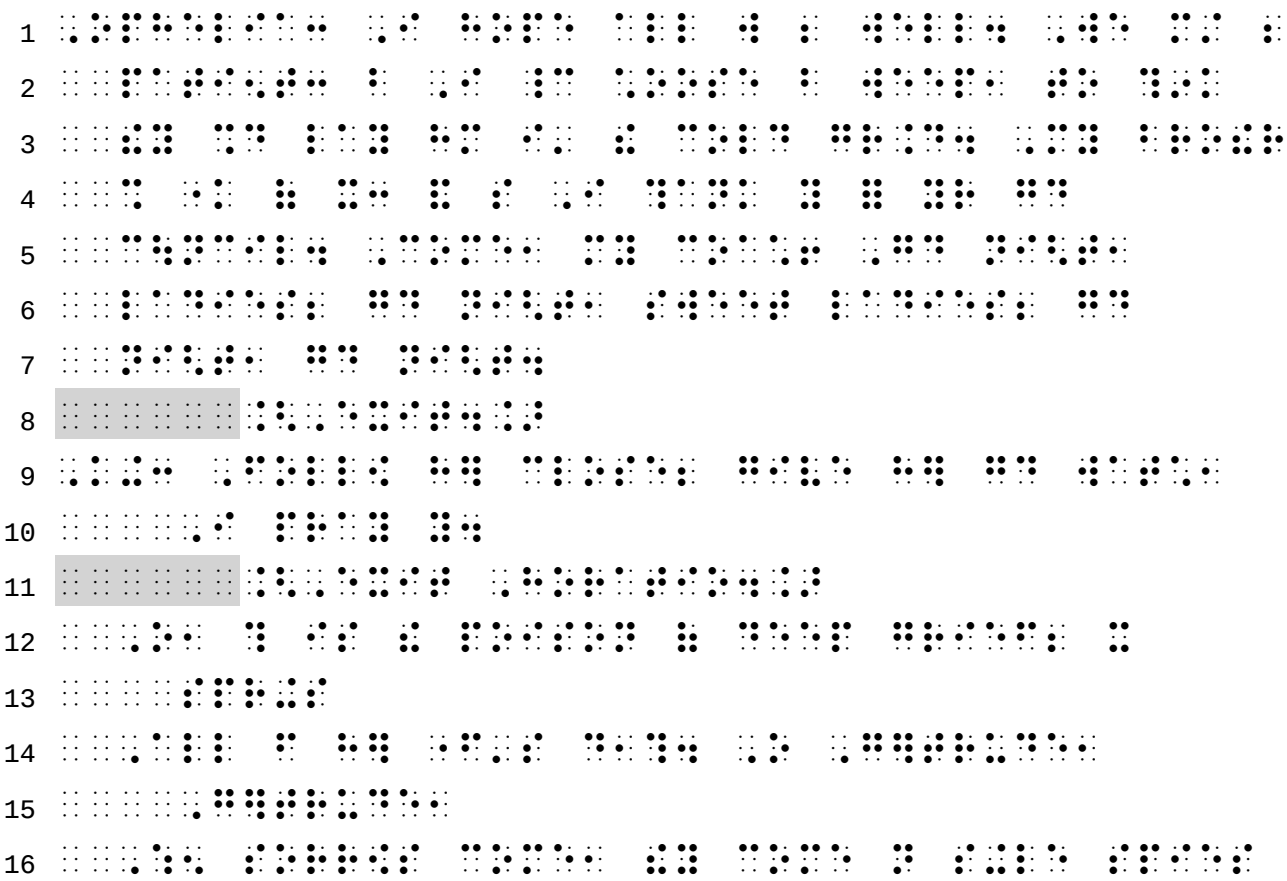
Sample 14-9: Mixed Prose and Verse Stage Directions

Ophelia: I hope all will be well. We must be patient: but I
cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him i' the
cold ground. My brother shall know of it: and so I thank
you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night,
ladies; good night, sweet ladies; good night, good night.
[Exit.]
King: Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray you.
[Exit Horatio.]
O, this is the poison of deep grief; it springs
All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude,
When sorrows come, they come not single spies



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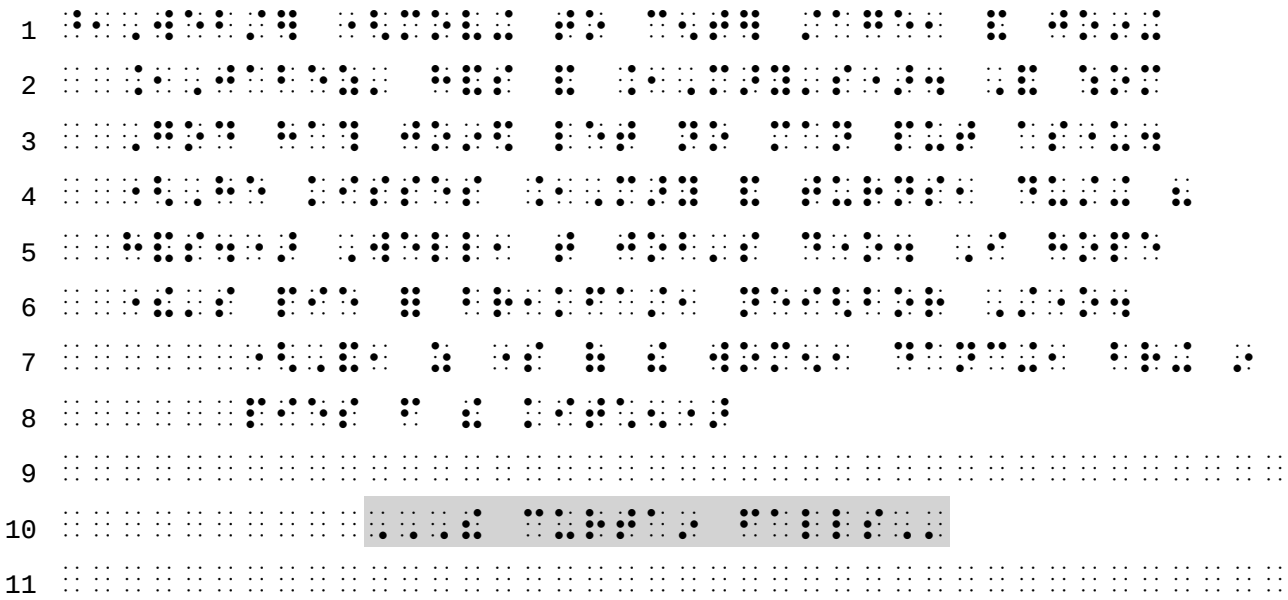
Sample 14-10: Conclusion of Play

Webster (*moving to center stage, and joining* Jabez' *hands and* Mary's). And whom God hath joined let no man put asunder. (*He kisses* Mary *and turns, dusting his hands.*) Well, that job's done. I hope there's pie for breakfast, neighbor Stone.
(*And, as some of the women, dancing, bring in pies from the kitchen*)

THE CURTAIN FALLS



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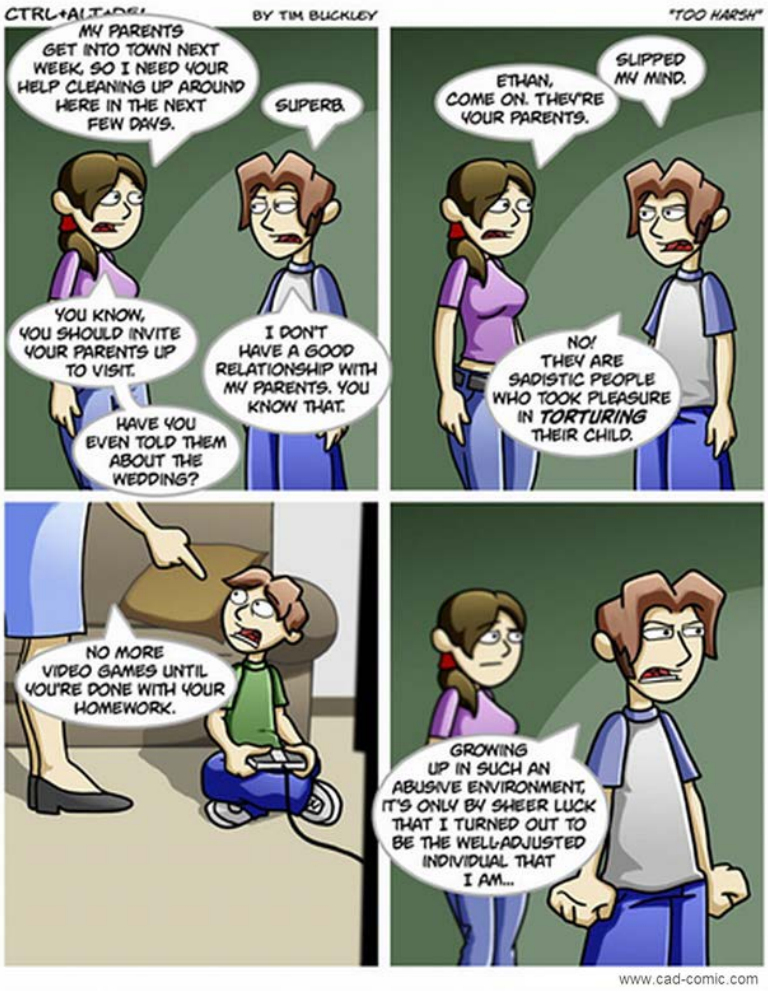
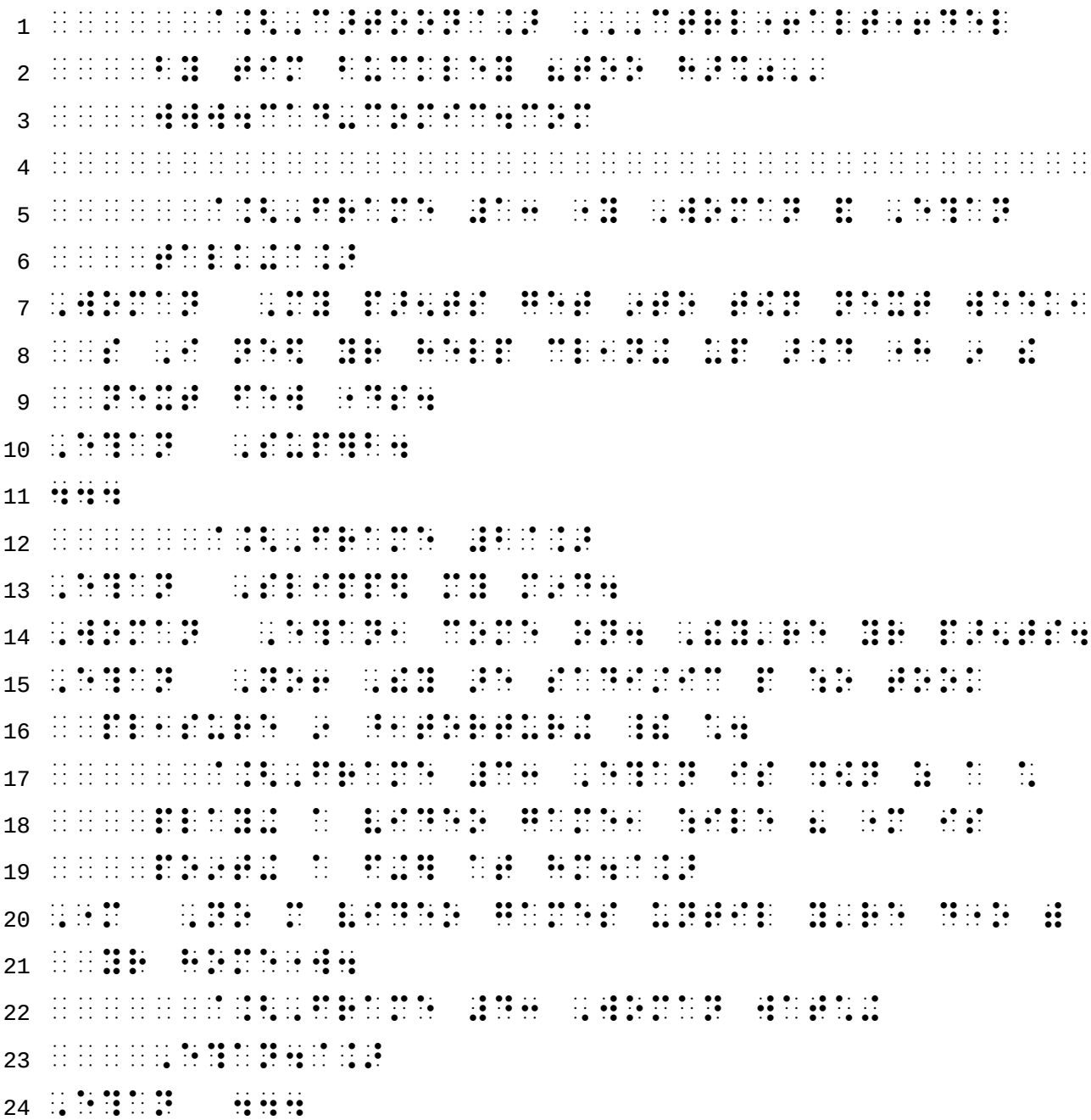
Sample 14-11: Cartoon





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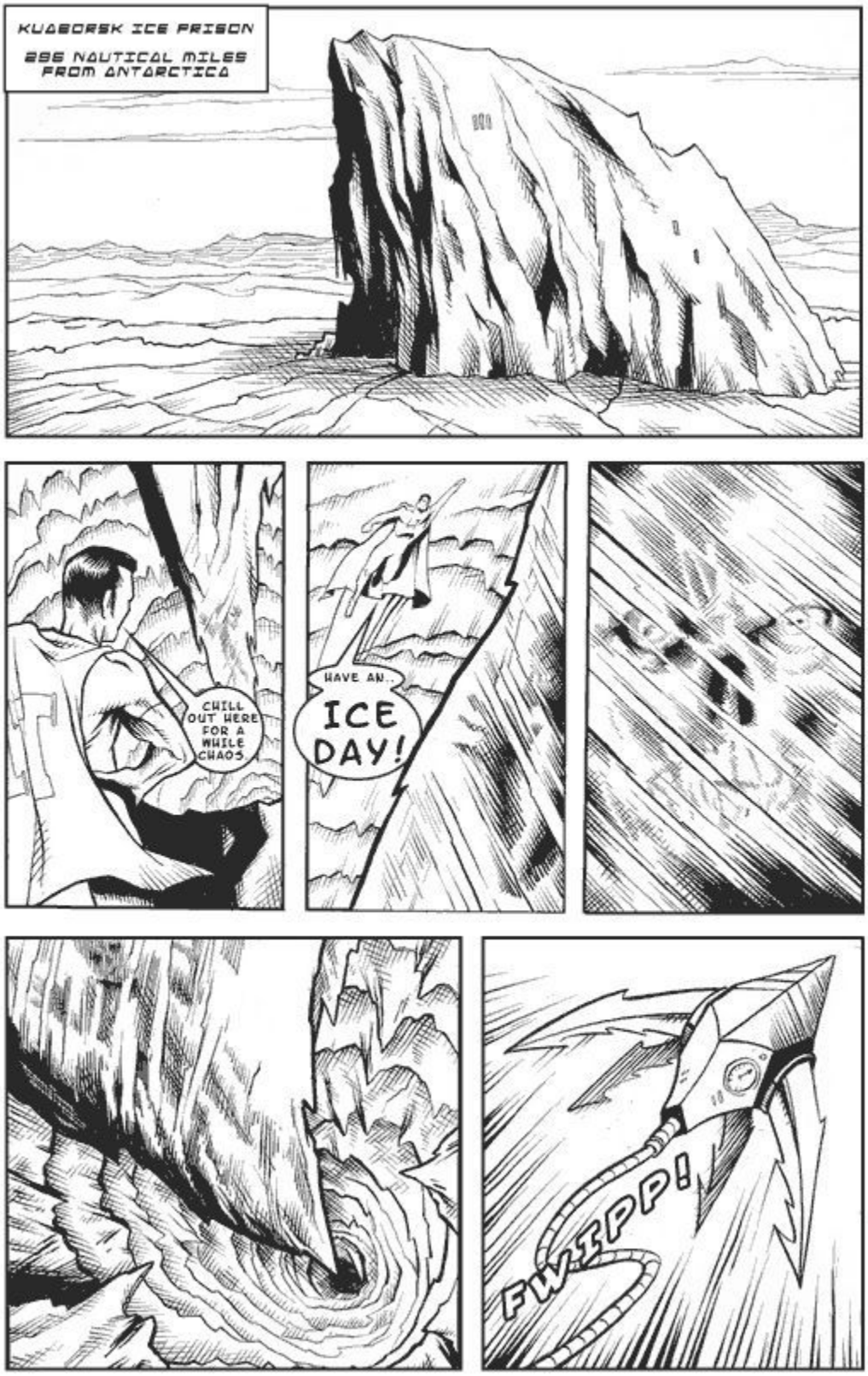
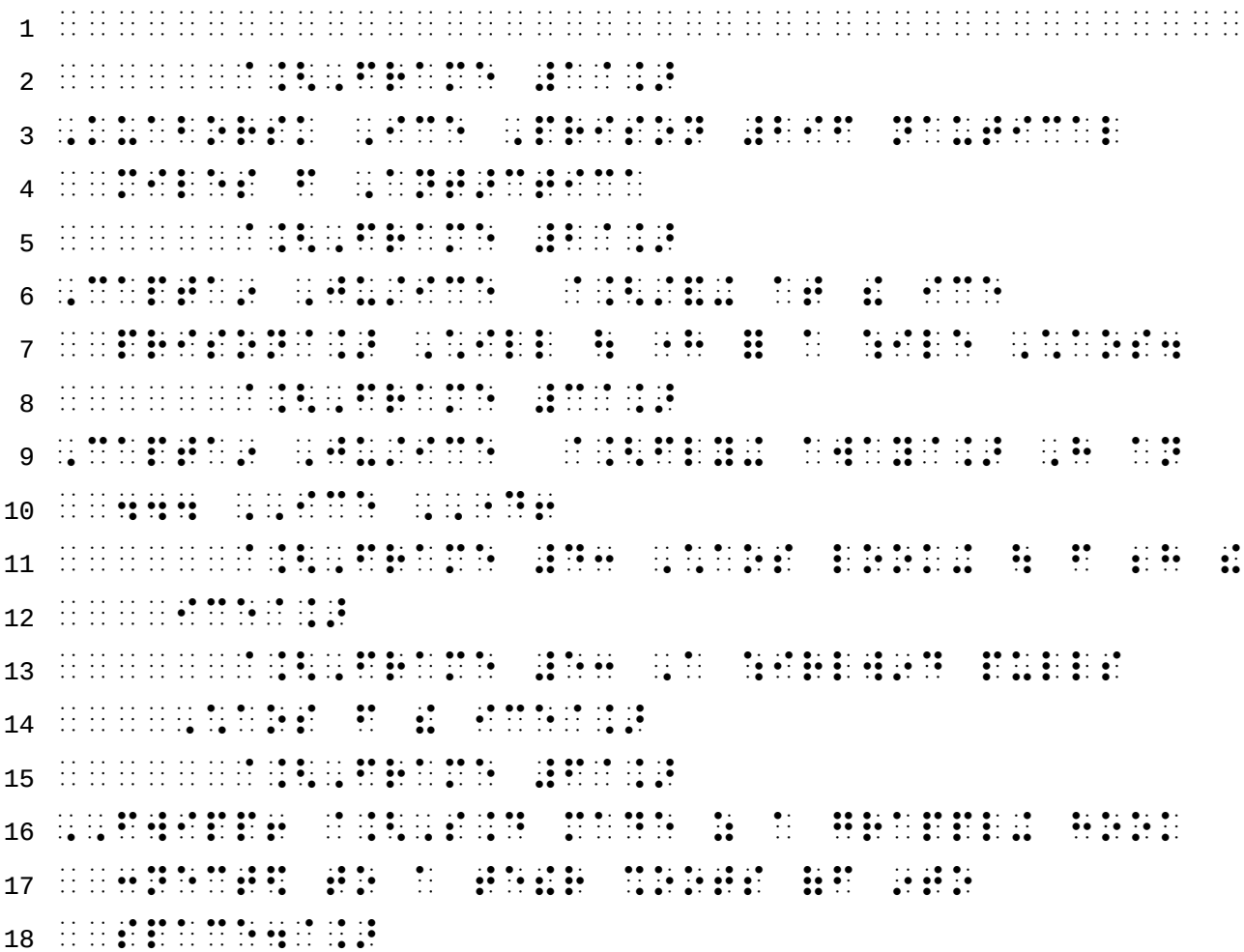
Sample 14-12: Graphic Novel





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