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CITY OF HEROES

BLOODLINES

PART 3 OF 3



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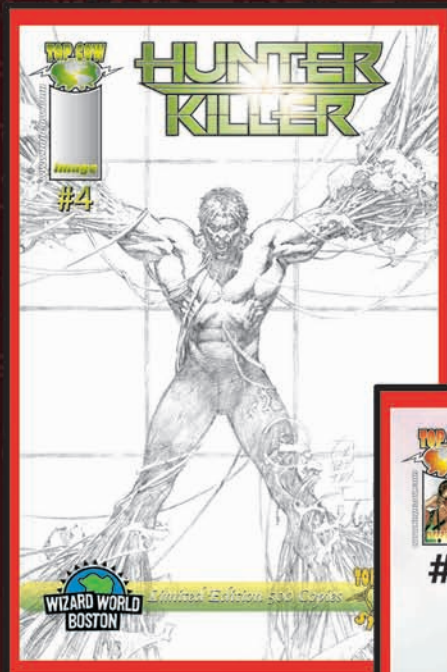


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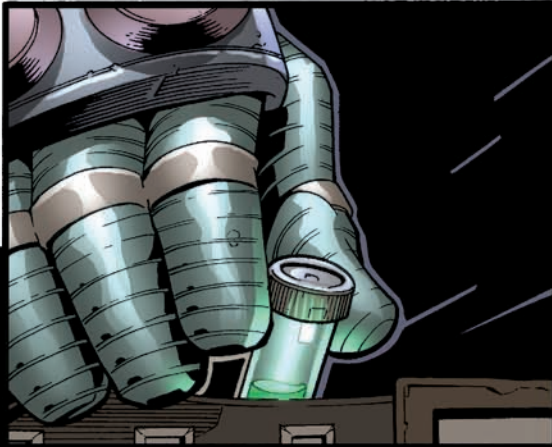
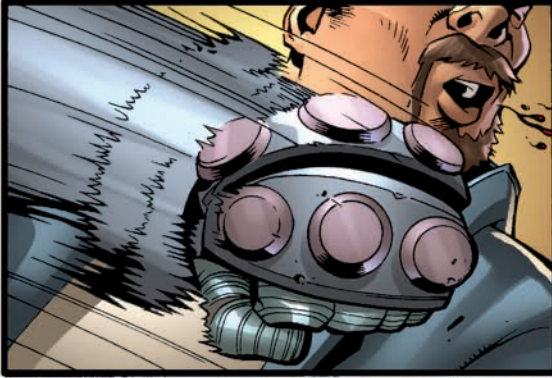
I WAS SUPPOSED TO
BE DONE WITH THIS
KIND OF THING.



IT'S A YOUNG
MAN'S GAME.



BUT EVERY NOW AND
THEN SOMETHING COMES
UP THAT ONLY THE BIG
DOGS CAN HANDLE.





SO I CUT OUT HIS TONGUE AND THAT WAS THAT.

SERIOUSLY. HALF A MIL FOR BURNING DOWN THE BUSINESS.

--SCREAMED FOR THREE HOURS BEFORE SHE DIED!

LOST IT ALL IN VEGAS, MAN!

FIVE HUNNED?! AIN'T NOBODY WORTH THAT, GIRL!

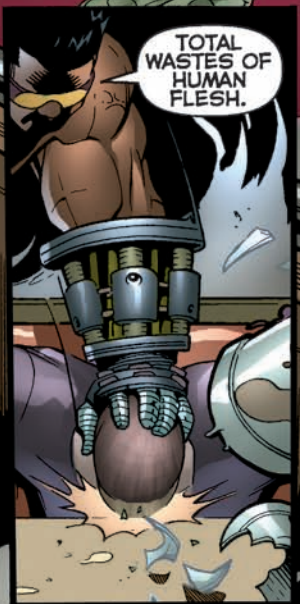
SO I PULLED MY BLADE--



--AND SHOVED IT RIGHT IN HIS EAR.
BLOKE DROPPED DEAD ON THE SPOT.



AS FOR HIS OLD LADY--
VERMIN.



TOTAL WASTES OF HUMAN FLESH.

YOU
HAVE TWO
OPTIONS,
PEOPLE.

ONE--
YOU GIVE
ME WHAT
I NEED.

TWO-- YOU
WIND UP IN THE
HOSPITAL WITH A
COMPOUND FRACTURE,
PUNCTURED LUNG,
SEVERE CONCUSSION
OR WORSE.

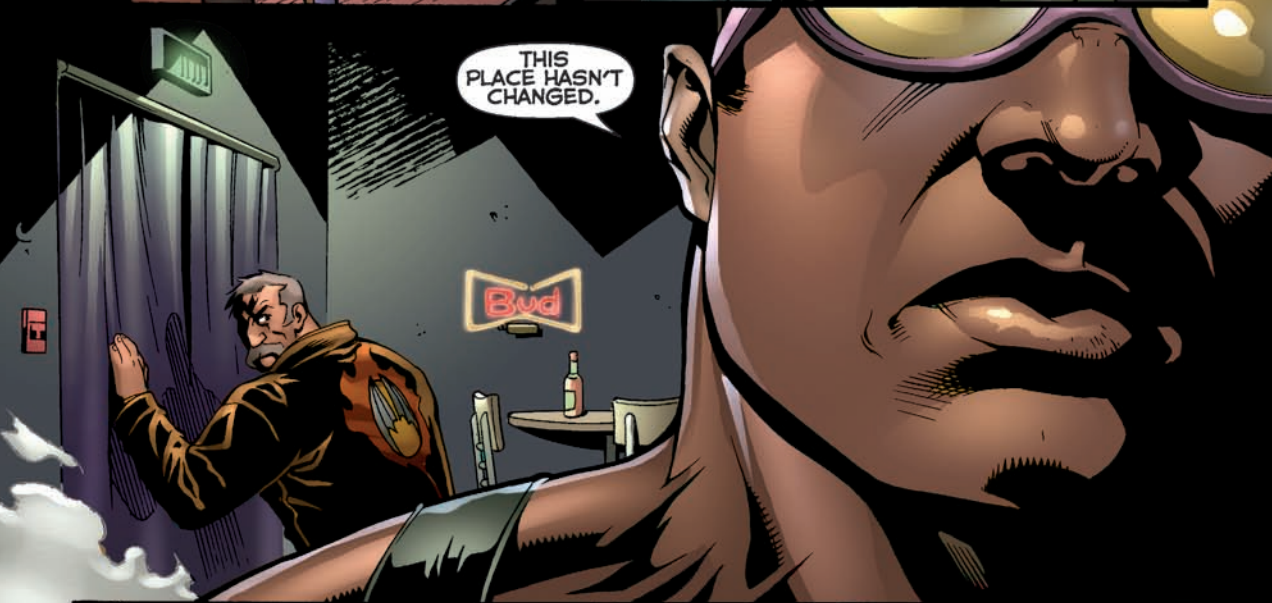
YOUR
CHOICE.

BLOODLINES

PART 3 OF 3

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Lord Recluse created by Sean Michael Fish
NCsoft Producer: Brian Clayton NCsoft Product
Manager: Kevin Sullivan



THERE WAS A TIME IN MY LIFE WHEN
THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN A CINCH.

NOW IT'S
TOUGHER.

I MAY BE IN BETTER
SHAPE THAN ANY
OTHER MAN MY AGE--

HAH! NOT
MUCH YOU CAN DO
IF YA AIN'T GOT EYES
IN THE BACK OF
YOUR HEAD, OLD
MAN!

BUT I'M
LIMITED.

MORE THAN I
CARE TO ADMIT.



GUT HIM, ROSCOE!

GONNA BE A PLEASURE.

THIS
#%*# SENT
MY OLD MAN
UP RIVER
YEARS
AGO.

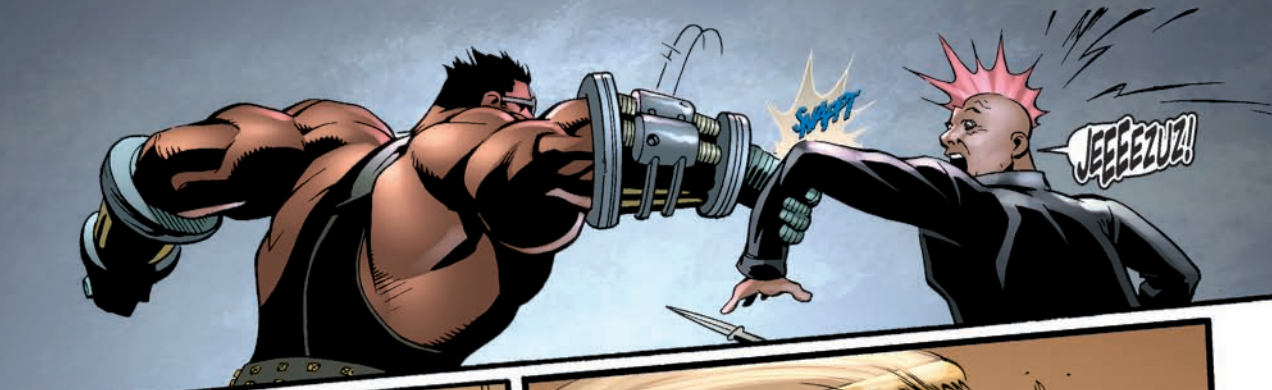
I MADE
MYSELF
AN EASY
TARGET.

I'D PAY FOR
THAT MISTAKE--
PERMANENTLY-- IF
NOT FOR SINCLAIR'S
ARROWS.

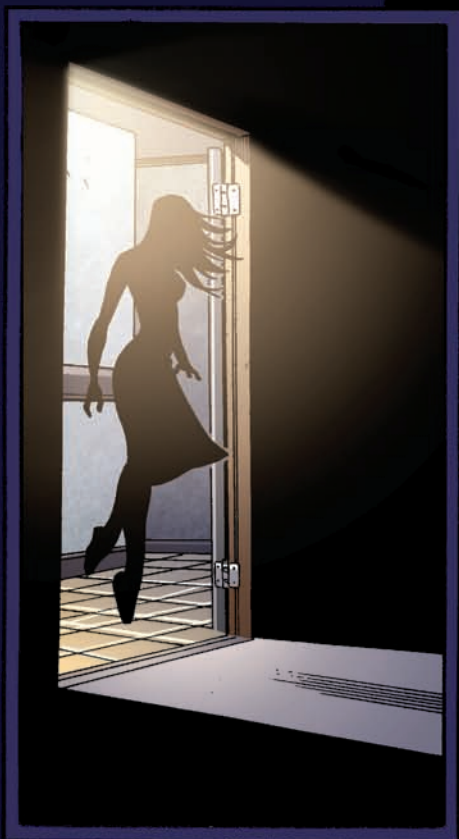
FWASSH

AGGH!

DAMN!
CAN'T SEE
A THING!









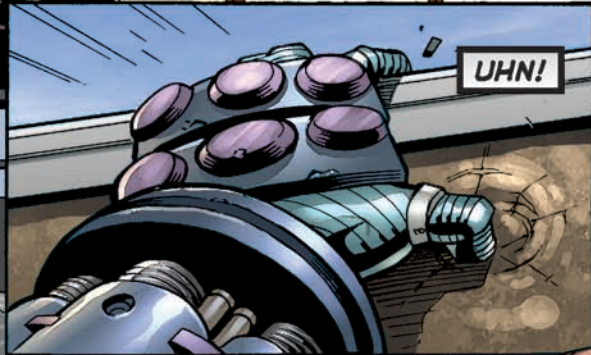
I SHOULD HAVE
GRABBED MORE THAN
JUST A FEW OF
SINCLAIR'S ARROWS.



I SHOULD HAVE
GRABBED A
HELICOPTER OR
SKYCYCLE OR
SOMETHING.



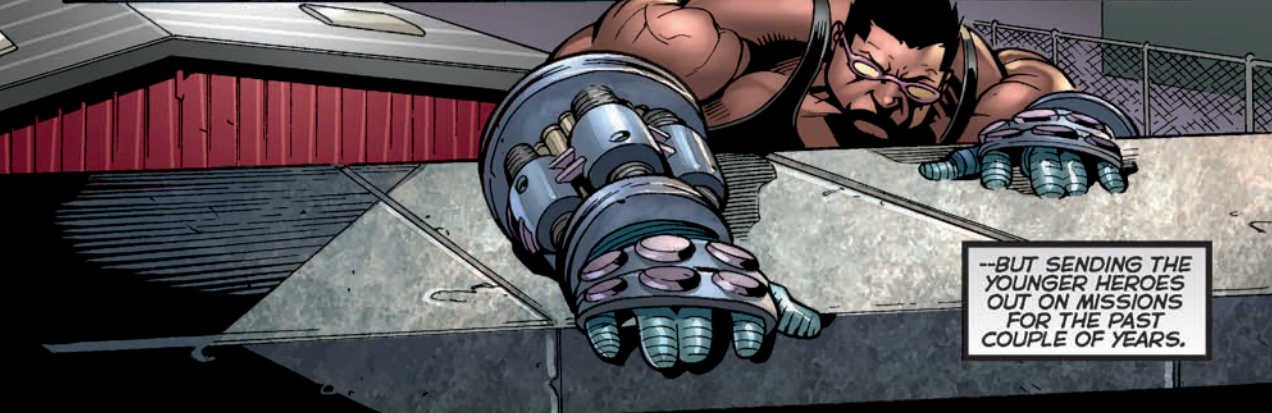
THIS IS TOO
MUCH WORK.



UHN!

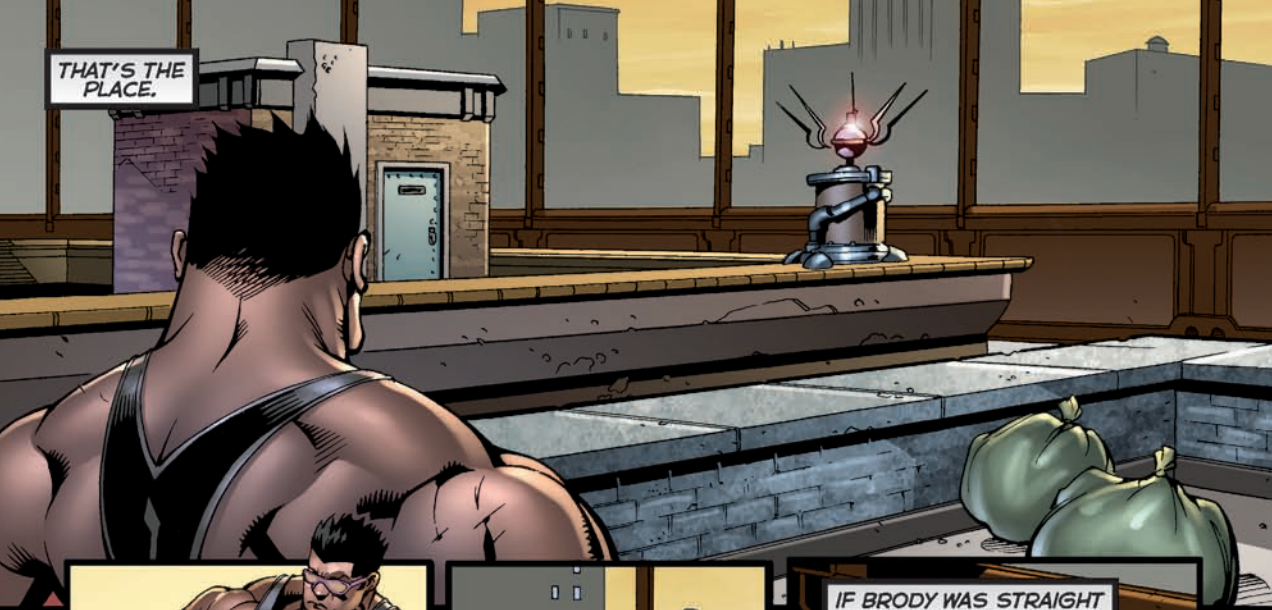


GUESS THIS IS
WHAT I GET FOR
DOING NOTHING--



--BUT SENDING THE
YOUNGER HEROES
OUT ON MISSIONS
FOR THE PAST
COUPLE OF YEARS.

THAT'S THE PLACE.



IF BRODY WAS STRAIGHT WITH ME I SHOULD GET SOME QUICK RESULTS.



IF HE WASN'T STRAIGHT WITH ME I'M GOING BACK TO THAT BAR--

--TO PLANT THE LAST KNIFE IN A VERY TENDER SPOT.

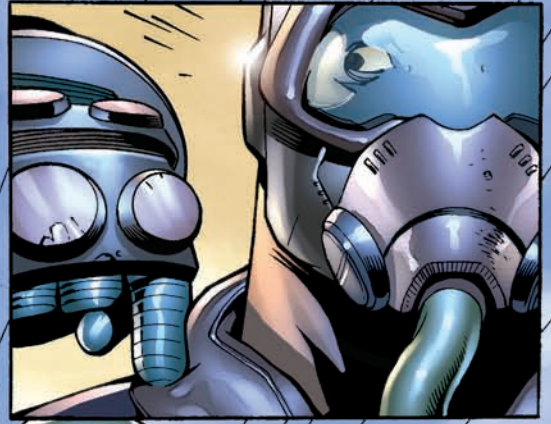
DAMN SENSORS CAN'T GO FOR THREE DAYS WITHOUT BREAKING DOWN.

AT LEAST IT ISN'T SNOWING.



YOU'RE A LUCKY MAN, BRODY.



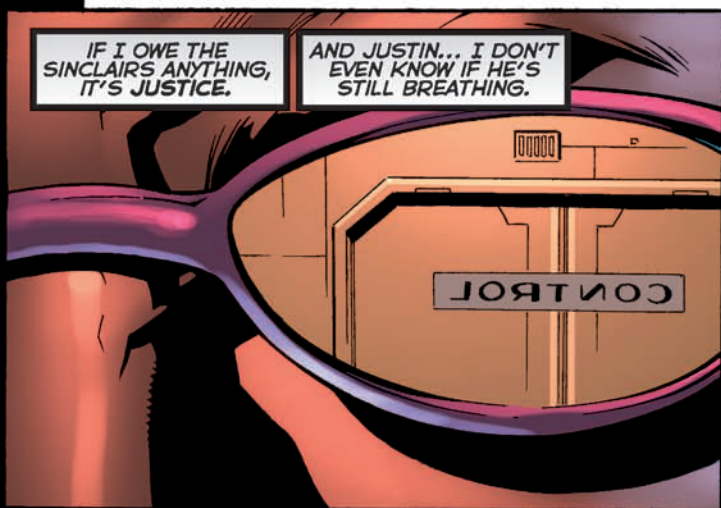


I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE PROTEAN IS ALIVE.



IF I OWE THE SINCLAIRS ANYTHING, IT'S JUSTICE.

AND JUSTIN... I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF HE'S STILL BREATHING.



SOUND THE ALARM! WE'RE INFILTRATED!

SOUND WHATEVER YOU WANT.



CALL EVERY GUARD YOU HAVE.

WON'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE.

NOTHING STOPS ME TODAY.





THE ARENAS ARE

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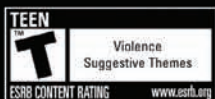
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- All-new Animé-inspired costume selections are found in the expanded costume creation system!
- Body and face scaling options allow an incredible amount of detailing for your custom hero designs!



A new era of game play excellence has arrived in City of Heroes – head-to-head competition in Issue #4: COLOSSEUM. Now you can pit your skills and teamwork against the most fearsome and relentless foes massively multiplayer online gaming has to offer – each other!

THE ARENAS ARE OPEN!



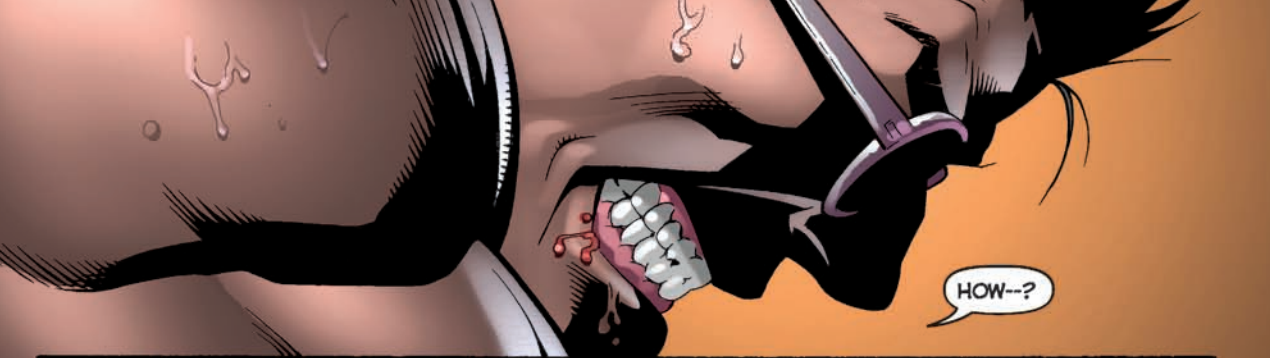
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BY THE
WAY, NO THANKS
NECESSARY
FOR RETURNING
THE ARROW.

REALLY.

THE
EXPRESSION
OF GRATITUDE
ON YOUR FACE
IS MORE THAN
ENOUGH.





HOW--?



YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT
NO SIMPLE ARROW CAN KILL
A SHAPE SHIFTER.
NOT EVEN ONE
OF SINCLAIR'S.

WHICH IS
PROTRUDING
FROM YOUR
CHEST EVEN AS
WE SPEAK, BY
THE WAY.

GOODNESS.
TAKING A
POWER NAP
ALREADY?

SLEEPING ON THE
JOB WHEN THIS
TOWN'S PROUD
CITIZENS HOLD YOU
IN SUCH HIGH
ESTEEM?

RATHER BOLD
OF YOU,
BRAWLER.



REALLY, I NEVER WANTED
THE SINCLAIR BRAT TO
STUMBLE ACROSS ME.
BUT I RECENTLY REALIZED
HE HAS BEEN LOOKING
FOR ME SINCE THAT
UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT
WITH THE TYRANNY
LEGION.

I RAN
RAMPANT... DID
VIRTUALLY ANYTHING I
WANTED DURING THE TIME
YOU ALL ASSUMED ME
DEAD. RIGHT UNDER
YOUR NOSES.

ONCE THE
BRAT DID FIND
ME, HOWEVER...
WELL, I FIGURED,
WHY NOT BEAT
THE SNOT OUT
OF HIM?



I KNEW THAT WOULD
BRING YOU OUT OF
RETIREMENT.

THE PERFECT
CHANCE FOR ME
TO MAKE UP FOR
THE ONE MISTAKE I
MADE SO MANY
YEARS AGO.

WHICH
WAS LETTING
YOU LIVE, OF
COURSE.







TIME TO
END THIS,
WOULDN'T
YOU SAY?



MMMF!



YOU!?



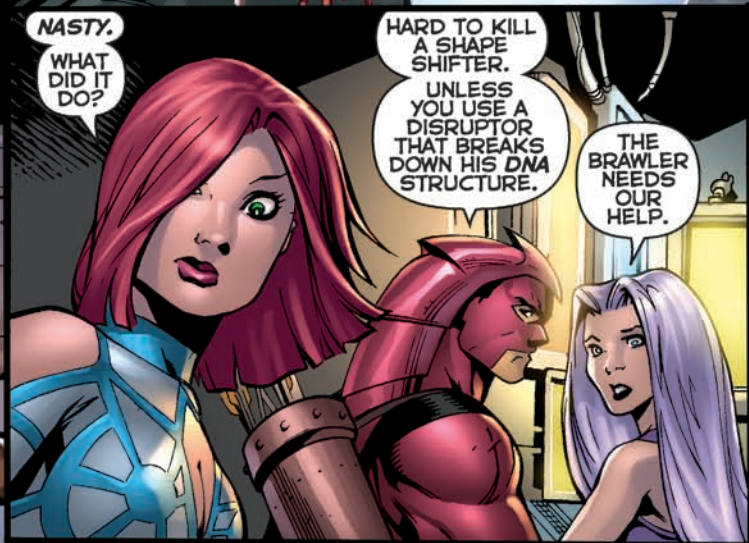
ME,
THANKS TO
NUMINA PULLING
US BACK FROM
DEATH'S DOOR
JUST AS WE
WERE READY TO
ENTER FOR
ETERNITY.

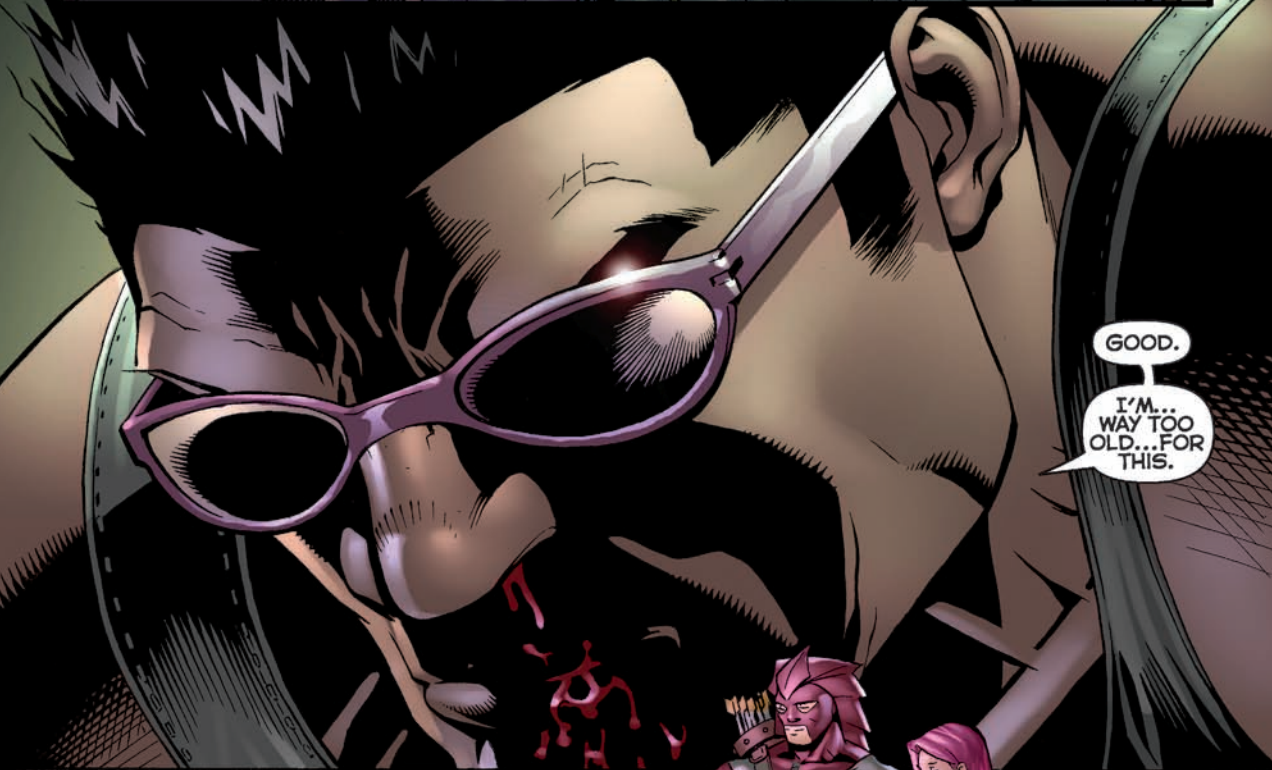
AND
SINCE YOU
LIKE THAT
MEMENTO SO
MUCH...



HAVE
ANOTHER.







Paragon City's *ONLY* source for the TRUTH

FANTASTIC FAN ART!

from the City of Heroes Community. **PAGE 6**



THE PARAGON **TATTLE**

February, 2006

\$2.75

*Whether Hero or Father,
his daughter's pain is a*

BURDEN OF RESPONSIBILITY

PAGE 2



*Paragon City is happy to welcome
you, new arrival ... now please fill
out forms J-10-40, 26-F, V-303...*

ZOT ARRIVAL: PART ONE

PAGE 4

THE FURTHER MISADVENTURES OF

Q-4ORCE

PAGE 7



Burden of Responsibility

By Lucien Soulban

Draven ran across the street, ducking his head under his brown trench coat. The downpour was furious, though the sky had been crystal blue moments ago. Draven spotted the two combatants several stories above his head. Dressed in her black and gold costume, her lightning blast a spear from heaven, Storm Sister had just finished off the Outcast shocker.

Storm Sister caught the unconscious Outcast as he fell, grabbing him by his leather jacket.

Draven stopped short of waving at her; she didn't know Draven. She only knew Jamaican Sun...

...A lifetime ago, Draven realized. A wave of nostalgia washed over him, along with the pelting raindrops. He entered the War Wall Security Gate for Baumton and headed to the PPD officer in riot gear.

"I'm Draven Turnbull," he said with a slight Jamaican patois. "You have my daughter?"

Jayda Turnbull sat behind the long table, her arms crossed and her face etched with all the attitude her soft, 14-year old face could muster.

"We caught her and several minors sneaking under the War Wall," the police captain said.

Draven nodded. "Under? A Rikti tunnel?"

"Yeah. Repair crews have been slow to fill it in. Good thing the police drones have motion sensors. Your daughter and her friends could have landed in serious trouble."

"Heroes," Jayda said, picking the fluff from her parachute pants. "We're heroes."

"You're not registered," the captain said. "Told us her name was Sun Stroke, but we checked ... the name's already taken."

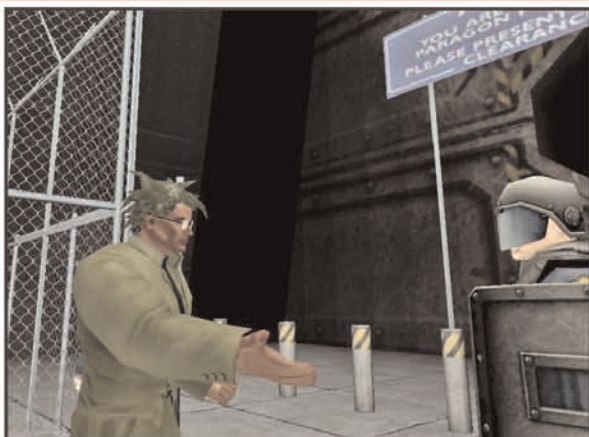
Draven sighed. "Sorry about this," he said. "Can I have a moment?"

The captain smiled. "Not a problem. I need to talk to the other parents. I've got a daughter too ... but she's not powered, thank God!" he said, laughing. He closed the door as he left the room.

Draven faced his daughter, but she was already looking away.

"Girl," Draven said softly. "You could've been hurt. The Vahz in Baumton got no problems killing young girls. They done worse."

"We could have handled it," Jayda said; her eyes filled with fire and the temperature in the room notched up a few degrees. Curls of flame surrounded her petit body.



"That all you got?" Draven asked, his eyebrow cocked.

Jayda frowned and concentrated. Fire spread across her body, a second skin overlapping her ebony features. While nothing combusted, the temperature soared. Fire alarms blared and Draven smiled as the sprinklers doused the room.

Jayda shrieked, the droplets turning into steam and suppressing her fiery aura. Within seconds, they were both sopping wet.

"And you wanted to take on Baumton?" Draven asked.

Jayda matched her father's gaze with her own fury. "You wouldn't understand!"

"Understand? Baby girl, you're too young to be --"

"I wanted to see mom!" Jayda shouted. "I want to see where she died!"

The smirk on Draven's lips faltered. Suddenly, Jayda looked more like his wife than he dared admit; it drove a dagger through his chest.

The captain tore open the door and winced at the steam bath. "What the HELL!"

"Sorry, Captain," Draven said. "But--" He looked at Jayda. "I need to enter Baumton with my daughter."

The captain screwed his face into an ugly ball. "Not a chance. No civilians. No unregistered powers are--"

Draven produced a gold identification card. In the photo he grinned, his costume dazzling silver like summer light on the lake.

"My Security Pass is still valid," Draven said. "I'll take full responsibility for my daughter."

Jayda was silent as they walked through the shell of Baumton. It was night, but fires still raged in bright pockets, encouraged by Trolls reveling in the ruin.

Little had changed since Draven's last visit, though he smiled at a car resting in a tree's cradling branches;

a family of birds had turned it into their mansion. Draven watched his daughter, noting her expression as she surveyed her surroundings. Her eyes fell upon a large, blackened crater; the shock rendered her momentarily speechless.

"Dad," Jayda whispered, "why don't you, you know, fly us over?"

"Because," Draven said, his throat tight, "this is how your mom saw it. She couldn't fly."

Jayda grew quiet again, obviously wrestling with some inner turmoil. Finally, she asked, "Why'd you stop bein' a hero? Before the Rikti?"

Draven hesitated, finding himself facing questions he often asked himself. "I wanted to help people. Your ... your mother and I didn't see eye to eye," Draven said. "She thought having powers meant fighting evil."

"You don't want to fight evil?"

"No," Draven said. "Doing good and stopping evil are separate things. Your mother saved the world by fighting bad guys. I wanted to help people to save the world."

"Don't you want to be a hero?" Jayda asked, looking disappointed.

"I--" Draven said, formulating his thoughts. "Look ... I wish I was there during the Rikti attack. It would have been me and your mom, in costume, fighting the damn invasion. But I was trapped in the Washington offensive – the war cut everyone off ... I couldn't get back in time. That's something I have live with my entire life. Jayda ... I got tired of putting the same bad guys away, again and again. And, truth is, I wasn't improving anyone's life. Not in any way that mattered."

"Yeah," Jayda said, continuing her walk. "But you serve food--"

"I run a soup kitchen," he said, walking beside her. "I'm helping people who really need it."

"Bums?"

"Jayda!" Draven chastised. "They're people who deserve respect. And if you want to be a hero, a real hero, you start by respecting others, girl."

"Yeah, but Statesman's a hero and he doesn't take any--"

Draven stopped her, his hand on her shoulder. "I met Statesman once. The man's got his eye on the big picture, no doubt. But maybe he's forgotten the little picture. Forgotten what it means to be cold. Hungry. That's why I help the homeless ... give them dignity so they don't run to the Lost for protection. Statesman, Manticore, Sister Psyche? They fight villains. Me? I help people so they

don't become the next Marrow Snap or Dreck."

Draven and Jayda stared at one another. "I'm sorry, dad," Jayda mumbled. "I didn't mean nothin' by it."

"I know," he said. Draven didn't move.

"What?" Jayda asked, nervous.

"We're here."

Jayda blinked, confused. She looked around at the piles of rubble. "Here?" she asked, growing upset. "There's nothing here."

Draven nodded. He understood her confusion, her anger. There was nothing to commemorate where her mother fell. Nothing but burnt concrete.

"She fell here," Draven said. He pointed two feet over. "Crystal Honor died there, helping your mother." Draven quietly continued the roll call, indicating the collapsed building, the burnt cars, the torn road. "Bennu the Ancient fell there. That's where Crimson Spec Op died. Lassiter is still buried somewhere under that building."

Draven stopped when he saw tears cresting Jayda's eyes. "Why are-- What--" She stopped, unable to speak.

"We can't give them memorials because the Trolls or Vazh would tear them down again."

"It's not right," she cried.

"No," Draven said quietly. "It isn't."

Draven stepped forward and hugged his daughter. Most times, she was too old for that ... most times.

Someone's hard boot scrapped on rock.

Not the place to be lost in the moment, Draven thought. He was suddenly aware, alert to his surroundings.

"Aw," someone said. "You sweet."

Jayda and Draven separated quickly and found



themselves facing three Trolls. By the small horn on the leader's head, Draven could see that he bore the dubious honorific of Gardvord. There were a half-dozen or more scattered in the shadows behind them. Jayda, still angry and stung, ignited her power. Flames covered her body and shone brighter than

Continued page 4

Burden

Continued from page 3

Draven had ever seen.

The Trolls laughed.

"Cool," the Gardvord said. "Me found cigarette lighter," he called out to the others. They laughed in response.

Jayda stepped forward, but Draven quickly interposed himself between her and the Trolls.

"Hey!" the Gardvord said. "You no cut in line. She first. You want her to watch you die?"

"Actually," Draven responded. "You *should* be asking yourself why I brought my daughter into Baumton."

The Trolls leered.

"And why I don't seem worried."

The Trolls' eyes widened as Draven's eyes shone like mercury. They backed away when pinpricks of

light shot from his pores and daylight arrived twelve hours early. Draven exploded into a sphere of coherent light that raced outward. It slammed into the Trolls, instantly knocking them all unconscious.

"Wow!" Jayda exclaimed as the light faded.

"That felt good," Draven admitted. "Time to go?"

Jayda studied the black concrete. "In a bit?" she asked.

"Sure." Draven rested his arm around his daughter's shoulder. "I tell you what," he said. "If you're willing to work at the soup kitchen ... once a week ... I'll take you for registration and training."

"Okay," Jayda replied. "You think I can take mom's name?"

"Summer Light?" Draven asked, studying the black concrete. "I think she'd like that."



Zot Arrival: Part One

By Robert Bergeron (Roughtrade)

"Name?"

"Elisabeta Mechitbayeva." I answered the woman behind the desk.

"Mechabuy...?"

"Mea-sheet-baa-ava." I pronounced it for her slowly. It was my mother's maiden name.

"Birth certificate?" She asked, holding out a hand.

"I'm sorry, I don't ... I'm not from here."

"They don't have birth certificates in Russia, or wherever you come from, Mzz Mechasha-what-ever?" The woman frowned at me, looking up from the computer terminal at her desk.

"I was told that it wasn't necessary to have identification papers to apply for Hero Status with your bureau." I tried to not let it fluster me.

"That is technically correct." She answered

with a slight sigh, looking me over again. "Secret Identities are protected, but it does cause more paperwork. Since you're not in a costume, I just figured you didn't have any objections.

"Just between you and me, sweetie." She leaned a bit over her desk and spoke in a hushed tone. "The white hair is a bit noticeable. You might want to try to wear your costume, or dye your hair, if you want to maintain a Secret Identity."

"No, it's not that so much." I replied. "I'm just not from here. At least, I'm from Paragon City but not really this Paragon City."

"Dimensional Entity?" She arched an eyebrow and tapped at her keyboard. "Then you'll need to fill out forms twenty-six-eff and a jay-ten-forty. Visa status under the Heroic Assistance Act and a simple loyalty oath."

"Look, I'm not a devil or some creature from the pits. I was born in Talos, my parents were first

Continued page 5

Zot

Continued from page 5

generation immigrants from Rumania; I just come from an alternate time-line." I watched in dismay as her printer spewed out paper, on its fifth sheet and showing no sign of slowing.

"You still need to fill out the paperwork, sweetie." Her smile had seemed grandmotherly at first, but now seemed to be less than kind. "I've got at least ten applicants waiting behind you. Why don't you go get your tights, or miniskirt or whatever it is you wear with your mask and then fill out the papers." She gestured towards a door off to the left. "Come see me when you've got these filled out."

I collected the papers and a pen and picked up the briefcase that contained my armor, heading for the rest rooms. The three doors baffled me for a moment. Men, women and oh-my-lord-how-big-are-you! A hulking grey being in a silk suit stepped out of the last one. I'm not a tiny woman, almost one hundred seventy centimeters, but I think his arms were as big around as my chest. He grumbled something under his breath and glared at me when I could not stop staring.

I've been familiar with heroes for much of my adult life, for there were as many of them in the Paragon City I came from as there are here. But I hadn't been this close before, and I never really had given thought to certain aspects. I looked at the door again, shook my head and hoped that the janitors around here were well compensated.

In the ladies room, two women in tight fitting costumes were attending to their hair and chatting. I entered a stall and began to put on my armor.

"Coyote said I showed a lot of potential." One was saying to the other.

"He asked for my personal number and said I should call him anytime if I wanted to talk about hero stuff or just take a load off my chest."

"Oh Lord, is he still using that line?" The other said. "Look, he may be a shaman, but let me warn you, there's more than a little wolf in him, if you catch my drift."

"I'm sorry?" The younger girl sounded vexed, although I might have imagined it as I put on my helmet. Things sounded tinny and a bit distant.

"Look, I'm just here to file the paperwork and get my cape back." The older woman was saying. "I'm not trying to step on any toes. Coyote is do-

ing a great thing, spending time in the Hot Zone, helping with testing new heroes and giving people advice. He really does know his stuff, but he's male and your costume leaves little enough to the imagination. He won't be the last to hit on you."

"But he seemed so nice."

"Yeah, he's a charmer." There was something



wistful in her voice that made me think perhaps she had fallen for Coyote's line. "He's a very nice guy, but his moral compass comes from a pagan spirit of animalistic nature."

"Just keep that in mind if you call him, and wear something that doesn't show off so much."

"You think this is too much?" the younger girl asked.

I finished putting on my armor and exited before they could rope me into the conversation.

In the Dimensional Exiles room things were a bit more chaotic. There was a babble of voices, most in languages I didn't understand. Judging from the company they likely were neither from this earth, nor one close in parallel.

A large man with a mace was arguing with a stocky bearded fellow carrying an axe. At the chair beside them a pretty young woman with golden hair and pointed ears was slowly losing her temper and trying to shush them.

Elsewhere there were other groups in similar circumstances, just different body types. Things with green skin and scales and things with red skin and horns chatted and a huge blue man with three eyes sat on the floor in the back.

I chose a seat by a small, yellowish creature with a bulky body that had dusky red markings all over. He gave me a half crazed grin that showed

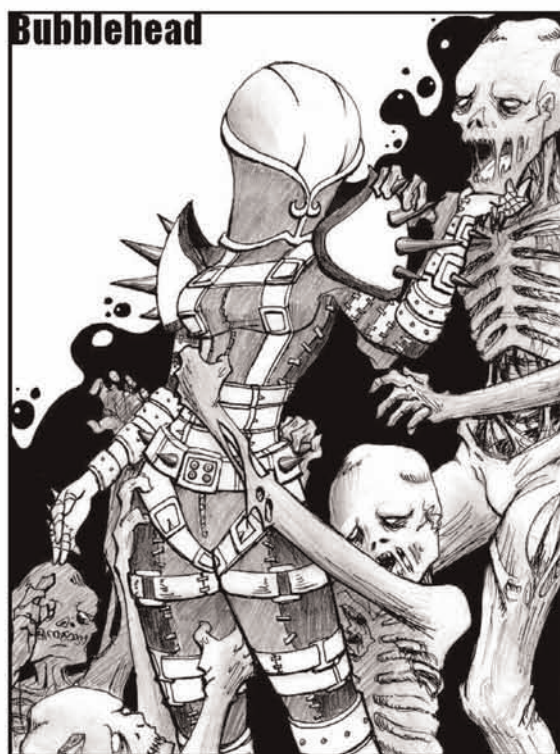
Continued page 8

FANTASTIC FAN ART!



Sparrow

By Jomaro Kindred



Bubblehead

By Lia Perrone



Placid

By Veikira

The Bionic Bowman and Dulcinea

By Amanda Rachels





Q4ORCE

THE MIGHTY
MODERATELY
AVERAGE
SUPER TEAM!

...AND HERE
WE ARE. THE LATEST
CONTESTED ZONE IN
THE CITY.

WHAT'S
THAT?

IT'S A **FRONT**
LINE ON THE WAR
BETWEEN **VIRTUE**
AND **VILENESS!**

AND A GOOD
PLACE TO HELP BUILD A
REPUTATION.

WHY IS THIS PLACE
SO IMPORTANT?

WELL, JUNIOR
HERO 008--
009.

WHATEVER. IT'S AN
AREA WITH **SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICANCE**.
WHOEVER WINS THROUGH HERE WILL NO
DOUBT **RAISE THE MORALE** OF THEIR
COMRADES-IN-ARMS.

HEY...

CITY OF
GYROS

WHAT'S
SO **EVIL** ABOUT
VEGANS?

THESE
VEGANS ARE
THROWING **ROTTEN**
TOMATOES AT
US, MA'AM.

AND
GYROS ARE **HEROIC**
BECAUSE..?

FREE
REFILLS ON
DRINKS,
SON.

THIS'LL
BE **GREAT!** I'VE
BEEN SAYING UP
"FOOD FIGHT"
BATTLE CRIES
SINCE **HIGH**
SCHOOL!

CITY OF
VEGANS

Zot

Continued from page 5

shark's teeth, but otherwise seemed harmless. I hoped he was harmless. I tried to ignore the room and began filling out the paperwork. Much of it seemed to not really be applicable.

There were things I had expected: Place of birth. Has your dimension been in contact with this one before? Can you return home? Are there others from your home in Paragon City? And so on. Then there were questions I wasn't so sure I would want to know the answer to. Is your skin temperature hazardous? Are any of your bodily fluids inimical to human life? Do you have any special dietary requirements? If your answer to the above was "yes," then please list. If your dietary requirements involve blood, please fill out form eleven-six-bee to apply for approved rations.

Blood? I glanced at the fat, yellow, imp beside me and shuddered when he grinned again. Maybe I was being paranoid about not admitting who my father was in my home. He wasn't a villain there; and maybe I was wrong, maybe he wasn't one here.

"You help Tan'ari?" The thing beside me shivered and crouched on the seat of his chair.

"What?" I asked.

"Help Tan'ari!" It said again. "Tan'ari want to help humans. Tan'ari want to hurt evil. Tan'ari made to hurt evil. But Tan'ari need help." It held up its hands, each one ending in a talon that clicked. "Cannot hold pen. Cannot fill out form. Cannot help humans until can fill out forms. Help Tan'ari and Tan'ari help Blue Armor Lady."

"I don't need help filling out the forms." I stated, scooting my chair a bit away from him. It was a *him*, a small, wicked beard on the chin and the deep voice decided it for me.

"Tan'ari can help Blue Armor Lady in other way."

He hopped on a chair and threw his arms wide; there was a popping sound as hundreds of black thorns burst from his body, shooting in all directions and flinging a thick, viscous goo that splattered on my visor. Amazingly, not a single being in the room was harmed, which showed a tremendous control in my opinion. I was fairly certain it was only because he chose not to hit anyone.

"Sorry! Sorry! Tan'ari is sorry!" He hopped up and down on his chair, apologizing to the room as they began to protest. "Tan'ari is full of thorns. Must let the thorns out or they hurt Tan'ari!"

"If you promise to go outside to do that from now on, I'll help you." I wiped goo off my visor as I took his papers.

"Yes! OK! Tan'ari promise!"

"Let's start with the important ones." I said as he settled into a sort of perch on his chair. "Special dietary requirements." I looked at his teeth.

"What do you eat?"

"Flesh!" He smiled brightly. The teeth stood out quite sharply, bright white against his dusky yellow skin.

I wrote down "Steak Tartare" and went on to the next question.

Half an hour later I was at the front desk again.

To Be Continued

The Paragon Tattler Fan Art & Fiction Submission Guidelines are now Online! FOR THE SCOOP ON HOW YOU CAN BE A TATTLE-TALE TOO VISIT US AT http://www.cityofheroes.com/community/fansubmission_guidelines.html

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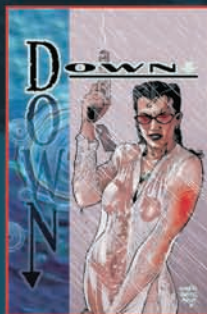
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