

CITY OF HEROES

#20

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Passing the Torch

PART 2 OF 2

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THE FREEDOM PHALANX: GUARDIANS OF PARAGON CITY FOR GENERATIONS. RECENTLY THEIR SCIENTIFIC GENIUS POSITRON LED THEM TO THE SITE OF A RIKTI PORTAL. CONFIDENT THEY COULD DEAL WITH WHATEVER THEY FOUND, THE FREEDOM PHALANX DIDN'T COUNT ON RUNNING UP AGAINST ONE OF THEIR FORMER ALLIES TRANSFORMED INTO A BRUTAL ENEMY. WITH THE HELP OF HONOREE, THE ALTERED HERO 1, THE RIKTI HAVE THE SIGNATURE HEROES ON THE ROPES.

VANGUARD: THE HEROES WHO FORMED THE FRONTLINE IN THE CONFLICT AGAINST THE RIKTI. MOST OF THEIR NUMBERS WERE KILLED IN THE WAR. UNBEKNOWNST TO THE DEFENDERS OF PARAGON CITY, VANGUARD'S AGELESS LEADER LADY GREY HAS REFORMED THE CORE GROUP FROM AROUND THE WORLD. AFTER ATTEMPTING TO COMMUNICATE WITH SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE PHALANX, VANGUARD HAS DECIDED TO FORGE THEIR OWN PATH.



EXCALIBUR
RETRIEVAL:
IMPEDED.



'E'S
STRONG, THIS
'UN. GOOD
THING WE
BOTH CAME,
EH?

HE SHALL
NOT DRAW THE
SWORD OF HEROES.
HIS BLOOD HAS BEEN
TAINTED BY THE
OTHERWORLDERS.

'E LOOKS
BLOODY
DETERMINED TO
PROVE YOU
WRONG.



THAT
DOESN'T
BELONG
TO YOU
ANYMORE.



STAND DOWN, OR I'LL PUT YOU DOWN.



NEW IMPEDANCE SOURCE:
OPPOSITION: MALE.
TERMINATE OPPOSITION:
RETRIEVE WEAPON.



YOU HEARD 'IM. LET'S GET THIS YOUNG MISS OUT OF 'ERE WHILST WE CAN.

FOR ONCE I HAVE TO AGREE. PROTECTING THE HUMAN WILL ALSO PROTECT THE SACRED WEAPON.

SUCH A CARING ONE YOU ARE.



KSSHAM



OK, WE DO THIS THE HARD WAY.

I WAS REALLY HOPING TO AVOID INJURING YOU, BUT SINCE YOU INSIST.



EVADE ATTA... AGH!



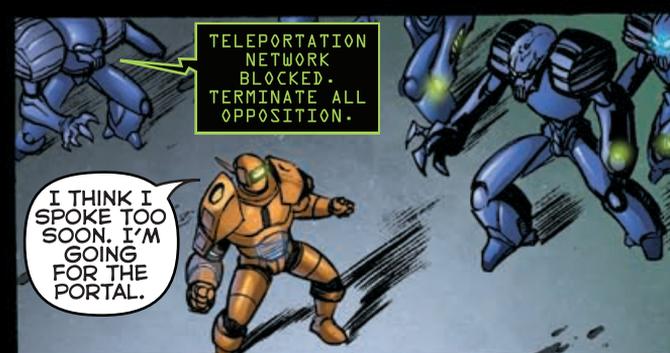
I REPEAT, STAND... DOWN!



POSITRON,
WHAT'S YOUR
STATUS?



SO FAR,
SO GOOD.
I SHOULD BE
ABLE TO HOLD
MY GROUND
UNTIL YOU'RE
DONE OVER
THERE.



TELEPORTATION
NETWORK
BLOCKED.
TERMINATE ALL
OPPOSITION.

I THINK I
SPOKE TOO
SOON. I'M
GOING
FOR THE
PORTAL.



I JUST
NEED TO GET
THIS BOMB
ACTIVATED.



STATESMAN!
I HAVE A MAJOR
PROBLEM HERE.
MY ARMOR IS
BREACHED.



HOLD ON, I'LL BE RIGHT THERE!



BAWHHAM



LET GO, YOU FOOL. I HAVE TO GET TO POSITRON, NOW!



CONTAINMENT FAILURE. EXPLOSION IMMINENT. FOUR... THREE...

NOOO!

TWO... ONE...







I'VE GOT THE BLAST CONTAINED... BARELY.

WELL DONE, GAUSSIAN. MY SPIRIT PHOENIX HAS STATESMAN.

GOTTA TELL YOU, SERPENT DRUMMER, I LIKE THAT BIRD MUCH BETTER THAN THE MONKEY.

AS SOON AS YOU ARE ABLE, DROP THE FORCE FIELD.

THEN BOREA AND I CAN SAVE THE PHALANX'S BACON.



LEVANTERA!
DON'T GET AHEAD
OF YOURSELF GIRL.
HERO 1 WAS EXTREMELY
POWERFUL AND THIS
RIKTI ABOMINATION
LOOKS TO BE HIS
BETTER.

LADY GREY IS
RIGHT. WE NEED
TO FIGHT HIM
TOGETHER.

OK, OK,
I GET IT.
CONSIDER ME
LITTLE MISS
TEAMWORK.



HERE'S A
LITTLE TRICK
THE MONKS
TAUGHT ME
WHEN I WAS
A KID.



EAT HOT
STEEL, RIKTI
SCUM!



THIS
SHOULD
STUN HIM.
LADY GREY,
NOW!



MAY I HAVE SOME OF YOUR YEARS?

RAAARRRR!!



BATTLE ABORTED. OPPOSITION OVERWHELMING.



WELL, THAT WAS... DISTASTEFUL.



SYNAPSE IS DEAD. I THINK SOME OF THE OTHERS ARE TOO. I SEE NO SIGN OF POSITRON, OTHER THAN A FAINT BUT RECOGNIZABLE ENERGY RESIDUE.

I CAN
BRING THEM
BACK.

OM MANI
PADME
HUNG.





I HAVE A... BODY.



I'LL SAY YOU DO. NO ARMORED SUIT THOUGH.

I... I NEED MY ARMOR... NOT TO CONTAIN MY ENERGY, BUT... I STILL WANT IT.



TAKE IT EASY, OLD BUDDY, I GOTCHA COVERED.



SOMEBODY ORDER A PIZZA?



WHAT'S THIS THING ON MY SHOULDER?

LOOKS LIKE A BIG OL' CHIP FROM WHERE I'M SITTING.



YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT IT BAD, GRAMPS, I JUST WOKE UP IN A BAD PRODUCTION OF 'A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM' OVER THERE.



WHAT IS GOING ON HERE, DEVON?

WE JUST PULLED YOUR FAT OUT OF THE FIRE.

WE DIDN'T NEED YOUR HELP...AND WILL SOMEONE PLEASE GET THIS MONKEY OFF ME?

SERPENT DRUMMER, CALL OFF YOUR PET.



HEY! I'M NOBODY'S PET.



COME TO ME MY FRIEND.



SEE THAT...I'M HIS FRIEND, NOT PET... FRIEND.

DON'T THINK THE PHOENIX KEPT QUIET ABOUT THAT CRACK YOU MADE EARLIER, HOT STUFF - CAREFUL OR YOU MIGHT HURT MY FEELINGS.

WHATEVER KEEPS YOU FROM CLIMBING ALL OVER ME.



SO NARROW MINDED. MAYBE YOUR SIS--MPGH!

DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT.



AS AMUSING AS THIS BANTER IS, WHAT'S THE PLAN?



PSYCHE IS RIGHT. WE NEED TO PLOT OUR NEXT MOVE.

I'LL TELL YOU WHAT YOUR NEXT MOVE IS, *MARCUS*. IT'S THE SAME AS IT WAS WHEN YOU LEFT ME WANDERING THE OUTER DIMENSIONS AND SACRIFICED HERO 1 TO THE RIKTI. YOU... DO... NOTHING!

IF YOU HAVE A POINT WHY DON'T YOU JUST MAKE IT?



THE POINT, DEAR BOY, IS THIS. ALTHOUGH YOU SHUT DOWN THIS PORTAL, THEY CAN EASILY REBUILD IT IN ANOTHER LOCATION. THIS CRASHED RIKTI SHIP HAS BECOME A RALLY POINT FOR AN INVASION THAT NOT ONLY ENCOMPASSES PARAGON CITY, BUT THE ENTIRE GLOBE.

POSITRON, CAN THIS BE RIGHT?



SIGH. NOT ONLY IS IT POSSIBLE, BUT IT'S HIGHLY PROBABLE SHE'S RIGHT ON THE MONEY.



THANK YOU. VANGUARD IS TRAINED TO DEAL WITH THIS THREAT. YOU... ARE NOT. THE FREEDOM PHALANX SHOULD BE CONCENTRATING ON ARACHNOS.



THOSE KEYSTONE CROOKS? WE EAT ARACHNOIDS FOR BREAKFAST.



THEN I'M CERTAIN YOU KNOW THE TRUE PURPOSE OF THE LARGE ANTENNA ARRAY IN GRANDVILLE.



CITY OF HEROES

GOOD VERSUS



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CITY OF VILLAINS

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The City of Heroes® Good Versus Evil Edition brings both the heroic world of Paragon City™, and the villainous world of the Rogue Isles™ home to you! Design a unique super-powered character from the nearly limitless costume options, and set off to be a courageous hero, or an infamous villain. Then do it again from the other side! This premiere edition contains two award-winning Games of the Year: City of Heroes and City of Villains®.



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IN STORES NOW!



WYVERN INTELLIGENCE INDICATES IT'S A COMMUNICATION ARRAY.



THEN IT LOOKS LIKE WYVERN INTELLIGENCE SUCKS.

THEY'RE NOT ENTIRELY WRONG, BUT THERE'S MORE TO IT THAN THAT. WE HAVE INFORMATION THAT INDICATES IT'S CRITICAL TO RECLUSE'S PLANS FOR WORLD DOMINATION.



OUR SUGGESTION IS THAT THE FREEDOM PHALANX SHOULD FOCUS ON UNTANGLING THE WEB OF ARACHNOS AND LEAVE THE RIKTI TO US.

SEND ME EVERYTHING YOU HAVE ON THE ARRAY AND WE'LL TAKE IT UNDER ADVISEMENT. ELSEWHERE.



OUR CONVERSATION ISN'T OVER, WATCHER.

IT IS FOR NOW.





THAT THING WEARING HERO 1'S SKIN SHIFTED BACK TO THE RIKTI HOME DIMENSION. WE'LL NEED TO KEEP AN EYE ON DIMENSIONAL RIFT ACTIVITY.

DO YOU THINK HE'LL BE BACK?

MAYBE. MY TRADITIONALIST RIKTI INFORMANTS TELL ME THAT THEY MIGHT BE GATING IN SOME MID-SIZED DESTROYERS TO DEAL WITH THE SUPER-POWERED BEINGS IN PARAGON CITY AND THE ROGUE ISLES.

IT'S GONNA BE A HOT TIME IN THE OLD TOWNS IF THAT INTEL PANS OUT.

WHATEVER THEIR PLAN, WE'LL BE READY TO DEAL WITH IT.

YOU TELL 'EM BUDDY.



WHAT MAKES THOSE HOT SHOTS THINK WE CAN'T HANDLE BOTH ARACHNOS AND THE RIKTI?

DO THE MATH, JUSTIN. WE LOST HOW MANY OF OUR TEAM TAKING DOWN THAT PORTAL? PROTECTING THE PLANET'S BORDERS IS VANGUARD'S CHARTER. BESIDES, LORD RECLUSE IS ULTIMATELY MY RESPONSIBILITY.



STATESMAN'S RIGHT. WE NEED TO FOCUS ON THE THREAT FROM THE ROGUE ISLE'S. I HAVE A BAD FEELING ABOUT WHAT THE GRANDVILLE ARRAY CAN DO.



I KNOW I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE THAT HAS A SCORE TO SETTLE WITH RECLUSE'S GOONS.



YOU AREN'T. I'M THE ONE THEY TRIED TO TURN INTO A GIANT SPIDER, REMEMBER? THIS IS CLEARLY THE PLACE WHERE WE CAN DO THE MOST GOOD.



SOUNDS LIKE WE'RE ALL IN AGREEMENT. LET'S HEAD BACK TO ATLAS PARK.



WELL, IF WE'RE GOING TO LEAVE THE RIKTI TO VANGUARD, MAYBE IT'LL GIVE US MORE TIME TO DEAL WITH THINGS LIKE THAT.

HASSSSSHHHH



POSITRON AND SYNAPSE, GET THOSE PEOPLE TO SAFETY. MS. LIBERTY, HELP ME KEEP THIS MONSTER OCCUPIED. SISTER PSYCHE, GET MANTICORE IN POSITION TO TAKE IT OUT.



NICE WORK, PEOPLE.

LIKE I ALWAYS SAY, NOTHING CAN STOP US WHEN WE WORK AS A TEAM.

FROM THE MOUTHS OF BABES. LET'S HEAD OUT.

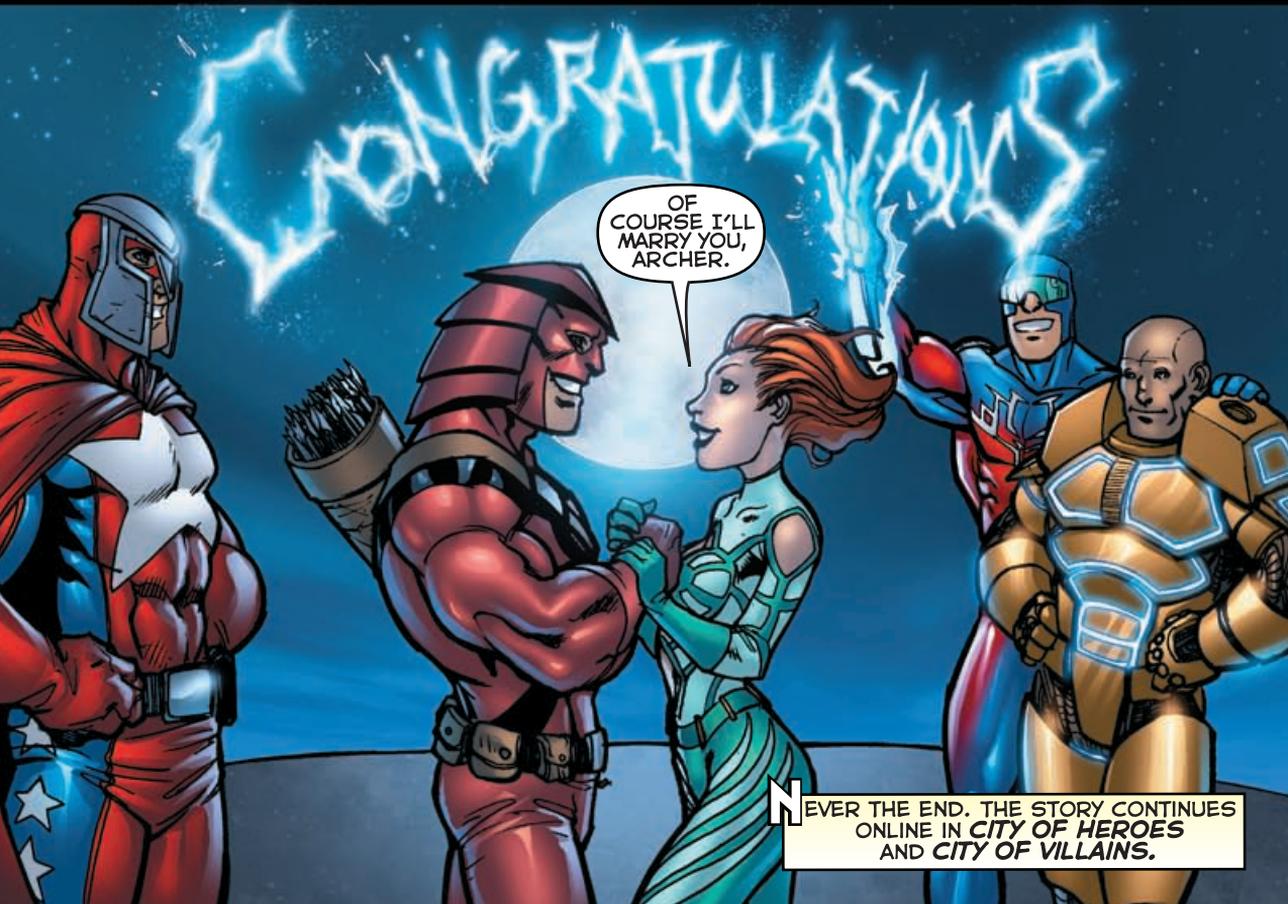
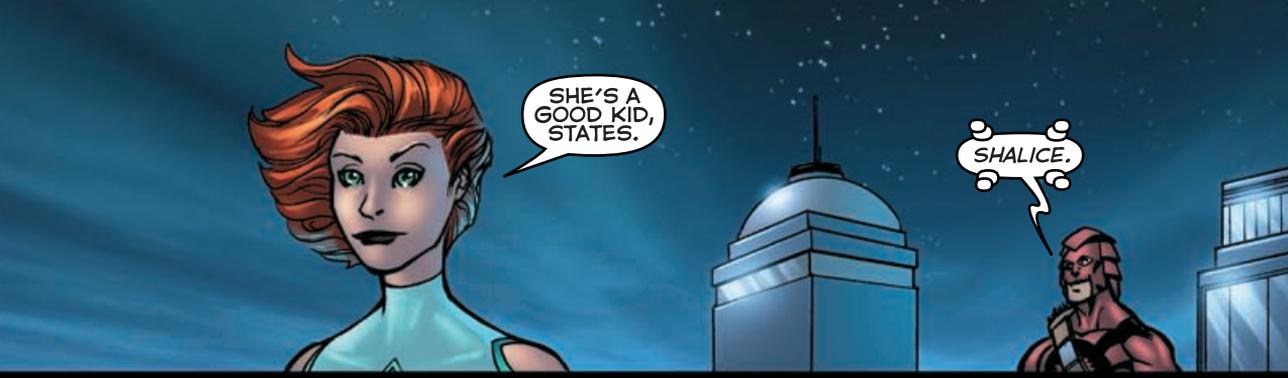
HEY! ARE YOU CALLING ME A BABE?



UNBELIEVABLE.
ALL THESE
YEARS AND I
NEVER KNEW
THERE WAS A
BADGE UP
HERE.



I BETTER
GET TO MY
USUAL SPOT.
THERE'S A
BUNCH OF NEW
HEROES DOWN
THERE THAT
ARE OBVIOUSLY
LOST WITHOUT
ME.



Paragon City's *ONLY* source for the TRUTH



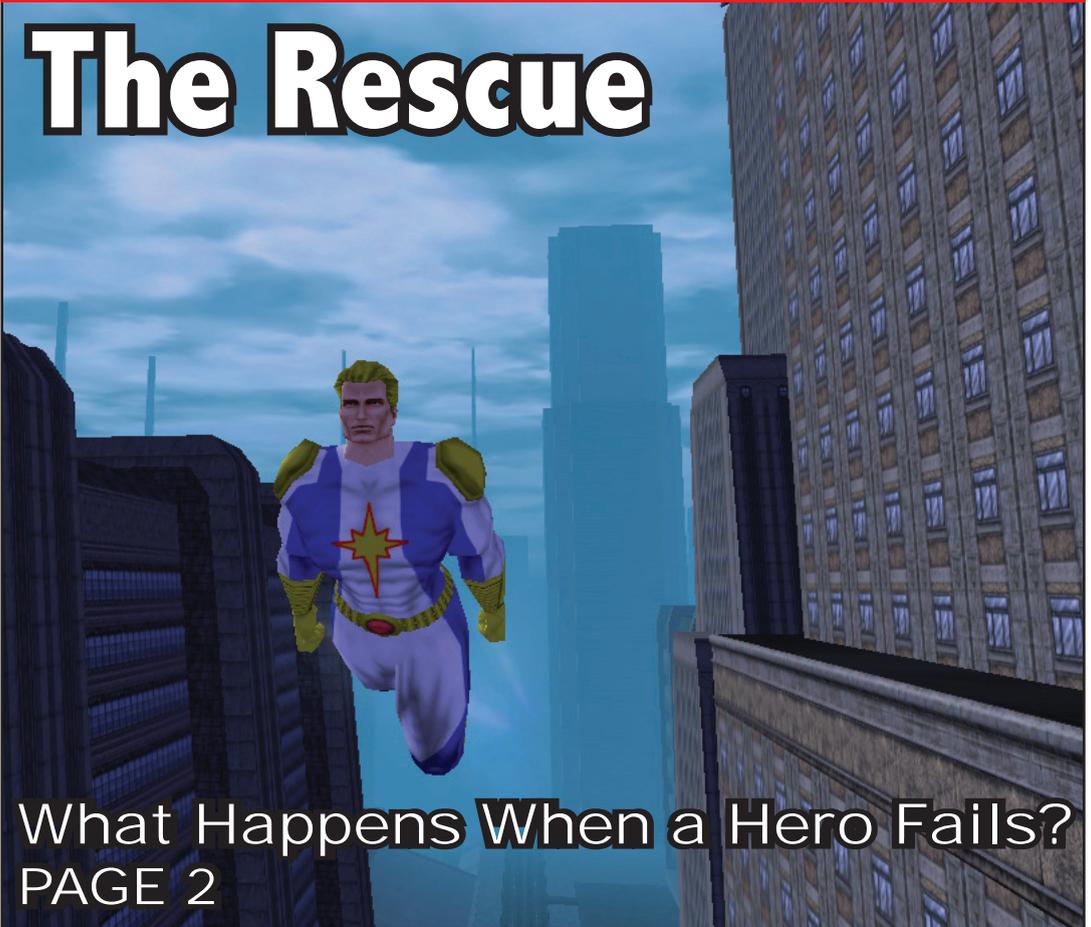
FANTASTIC FAN ART!
from the City of Heroes Community. PAGE 5

THE PARAGON
TATTLER

June, 2007

\$2.75

The Rescue



What Happens When a Hero Fails?
PAGE 2



A Star is Born

A Paragon Times Tattler Spotlight!

PAGE 3

The END of the Tattler!

THE RESCUE

By Ascendant

Help me.

I hear this, or its innumerable variations, many, many times a day. And every time, without fail, without hesitation, I answer that call. Most of the time I succeed, but not today.

Not this time.

He's maybe nine or ten, the life ahead of him placed in jeopardy by a single thought a half hour ago: *How high can I climb that crane?*

And now, here he is, hanging by his fingertips, on the other side of King's Row, screaming so loud that I could probably hear him even without hypersenses.

Help me.

And so I go, flying as fast as the atmosphere will permit. Flying as fast as I can and still dodge the buildings. And no matter how fast as I fly, no matter hard as I push myself, I know that this time, it won't be enough. Despite my gifts, despite my advantages, I know this immutable fact for certain: he's going to fall, and there's nothing I can do to stop that.

Fair enough, I think to myself. I adjust my path to intercept him in mid-fall, already visualizing how I'm going to grab his wrist, plucking him from doom as gently as time, physics, and gravity will allow. I'm seconds away now, though, so for a brief moment I harbor the hope that maybe that won't even be necessary. Maybe I *will* be there on time.

As if on cue, he falls. In that one eye blink, I reach out, grabbing at his hand as he somersaults through the air. My fingers dart towards his as I pass; I know I'll only get one shot at this.

And I miss.

And he falls.

For an eternal moment, he plummets, eyes wide, voice screaming, heart beating its final tempo. It's a split second that I know I will never be able to get past, one that will haunt me forever. Even as I turn for another attempt, I know with terrible certainty that he'll have hit the ground before I can save him.



Still, I try anyway.

Never, *ever*, give up. After all, that's what makes heroes, right?

However, by the time I arc back to save him, he's not where I thought he would be. He's not a red stain on the pavement, a mute testimony to my failure.

Instead, he's floating in the air, safely ensconced in a light green bubble of energy. I don't recognize the woman on the ground, but her brightly colored costume makes it clear why she's here. Her arms are outstretched in effort, and the boy in the green bubble lands gently on the ground, scared, crying, but most importantly, alive. Satisfied he's safe, she smiles, then, seeing me hovering above, weakly gives me a thumbs up.

I awkwardly wave back, and that's when I rediscover the miracle of this place once again, as I do dozens of times each day.

I'm not here alone.

I'm not fighting the Good Fight all by myself.

There are other Heroes out there, others striving to make changes, others putting their lives on the line to make a difference.

And I marvel, once again, how fortunate I am to live in a City full of them.

And I wonder, once again, why anyone would choose to live anywhere else.

THE END

A Star is Born

A Paragon Tattler Spotlight,
by Kameron M. Franklin

ATLAS PARK -- Located in one of the many towers of glass and steel that form the skyline of Atlas Park is the corporate office of Shincho Medtech. This Korean firm took up residence just four years ago, but quickly grew to rival the hometown competition, Crey Biotech, a subsidiary of Crey Industries.

Shincho Medtech specializes in bionic prostheses using cutting edge technology that makes it the envy of the industry. The company's president, Seo Shin-Cho, is a former surgeon. Dissatisfied with the progress made in prostheses development, he gathered some of the leading minds in robotics and cybernetics to form Shincho Medtech.

Lured to Paragon City by the opportunity to study the alien technology left over from the Rikti War, Seo moved his family across the ocean. Unfortunately, just days after setting up shop, Shincho Medtech was the target of corporate sabotage. Police were unable to determine the culprit and the company's progress on a prototype bionic limb was drastically impaired. Seo pressed forward, undeterred.

"I have sacrificed too much to get this far. I will not be bullied," the determined CEO proclaimed. What he didn't mention was that financial records showed Shin-Cho, as primary investor in the company, also stood the most to lose if Shincho Medtech failed to produce.

In what could have been considered a godsend, rival Crey Biotech made an offer to buy the struggling Shincho Medtech. The offer was refused, and Shin-Cho held the company together long enough to announce the approval of a patent for their bionic technology. Stocks for the firm rose sharply in response, ending any further chance of a hostile takeover in the near future.

But it did not prevent further tragedy from striking Shin-Cho's family.

Han Shin-Cho came to America during his junior year in high school, the only child of Seo Shin-Cho. Like many teenagers, Han resented being uprooted at first.

"I had a lot of friends back home," Han recalled, "friends I'd known since I was a kid. We'd grown up together. You can't replace that."

Han eventually settled into his new life, thanks in part to the thriving Korean community in Paragon City. He was a good student, and an athlete. Han competed in Tae Kwan Do tournaments locally and across the state, often winning.

"I love the combination of mind and body required to excel," Han explained. "There's a purity in the movements that you can't find in a lot of other sports. And it's physically demanding. It really helped to take my mind off the homesickness."

After graduating from high school, Han enrolled at Paragon City University. He decided to follow in his father's footsteps and become a doctor. Han has a deep respect and admiration for his father, even after being transplanted halfway around the world.

"My father is a man of vision, and he is determined to make that vision come true. He still makes time for his family, though. He's been to every one of my tournaments. I hope I can be as good a father, as good a man, as he is."

It is no surprise, then, to learn that Han spent a lot of time at the offices of Shincho Medtech when he wasn't in class or competing. Asked if he would like to run his father's company one day, he smiles hesitantly.

"I'd be honored, but I'm not sure I'd be the best man for the job. I like to help people -- and I think my father's company helps people -- but I'm more of a hands-on kinda guy. I want to be where the action is. That's why I chose surgery over business management."

Han found himself in the middle of the action during a trip to his father's office six months ago. According to Han, two men from Crey Biotech arrived unannounced just days after Shincho Medtech announced a new prototype. While Han waited in the executive lobby, he heard angry voices from within the office, followed by a loud crash. Worried, Han charged into the office to find the two men in powered body armor threatening his father. His father's oak desk had been thrown against the far wall.

A Star is Born, Continued

Adrenaline racing, Han fell back on his Tae Kwan Do training and engaged the two thugs. Although he stunned one with a surprise kick, the other was ready for him and threw Han across the room when he attacked. The first thug then picked up the desk and hurled it at the dazed young man. Han struggled to get out of danger's path, but the desk landed on his legs, crushing them.

“Capes,” street-slang for the costumed heroes that patrol the streets and skies of Paragon City, are a dime-a-dozen in this town. So what is so special about the appearance of yet another wise-cracking scrapper licensed by the Provisional Authority? As always, it is the man behind the mask that makes the story.

Han Shin-Cho remembers little about his hospital stay. (Crey Industries denied any involvement in the incident, issuing a statement that their armor had been previously stolen). He does recall his father at his bedside, and the attending doctor saying he'd never walk again.

Seo Shin-Cho was devastated by the news of his son's injuries: shattered bones and severed nerves in both legs. In a desperate move, Seo ordered his company's prototype bionic limbs to be used on Han. The procedure was a success, and both Shincho Medtech and Chiron Hospital officials hailed the achievement at a press conference.

Han required several months of therapy before he acclimated to the new prostheses. Like a baby, he had to learn to walk, retraining his synapses to work with their bionic counterparts. Han would later learn his doctors suspected he might show a surge in leg strength from the prostheses.

This revelation came to Han after his last therapy session. As he returned to his apartment, the clicking and whirring of his bionic legs still loud and alien to his ears, he spied a pair of Hellion gang members attempting to break into a car.

“There was no way I could avoid them. They were blatantly in front of my building,” Han recalled. He also remembered the fear that rose in his throat, and the anger at his cowardice. “I hate the criminal trash that litters Paragon's streets. I think some part of me

always wanted to fight back, but the rational part of my brain said I wouldn't stand a chance against a super-powered villain.”

That anger won out this time, and Han challenged the Hellions. He fell into a ready stance as one pulled a gun and the other charged with his crowbar. Han reacted with a roundhouse kick that sent the Hellion flying into a concrete pillar.



Stunned by the force behind his blow, Han barely registered the movement of the other thug, who had taken aim at Han and squeezed the trigger. Han leaped out of the way, a maneuver that vaulted him several feet farther than he expected. He continued jumping and flipping, dodging the Hellion's bullets and steadily drawing within striking distance. Then Han ended the fight with a snap kick that broke the thug's jaw.

“It was such a rush. I felt like I had won a national tournament. My first thought was to rush down to the Provisional Authority and register.” And that's what he did, after a quick call to the police.

According to the Provisional Authority registry, Jumpstar is a technology-based hero with superior reflexes and expertise in martial arts. Underneath the spandex suit that combines the colors of the Korean flag with the design of Han's favorite motorcycle jacket is a young man who loves his family and this city, and is driven to make it a better place. And that's what makes Jumpstar a hero.

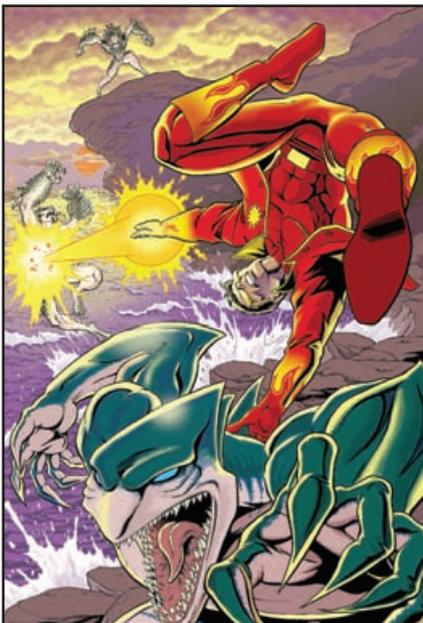
THE END

FANTASTIC FAN ART!

Avatar of RA
By Corvus



MarDun
by Richard Vang



Bayani vs. Capt. Mako
by Brandon McKinney



WyteFire
by Manuel "Poison" Clavel



Guruverse
by Manuel "Poison" Clavel and Veikira



AnglerFish Chibi on Victory
by Liz Chesterman



Reiraku of the Dark Dominion
by Sorah Suhng



Vanguard League
Douglas Shuler

Thanks to Gilgamesh for starting the Tattler, and a big thanks to all the players who have contributed and made CoH live. Check out the website, www.cityofheroes.com, for news on the upcoming fanzine!
– Arctic Sun



Ron Marz

Stjepan Sejic

FIRST BORN™

...And Baby Makes Three!

First Look Delivering June 2007

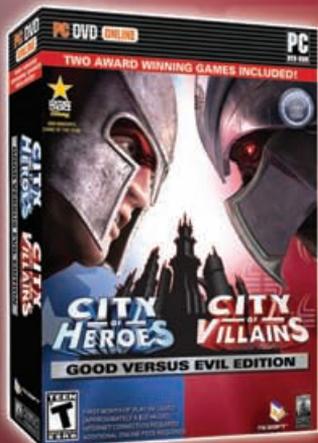
First Born #1 Delivering July 2007



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