




4

A large, faint watermark logo for 'COH COMICS' is visible in the background. It features the letters 'COH' in a stylized font above the word 'COMICS' in a similar font, all enclosed within a thin oval border.

THE ADVENTURES OF PIOUS HUNTER

PRIEST

ISSUE # 4 - THE ART OF WAR

Arizona, North of the Union Universe.

May 4th 2009



I am Reverend Pious Hunter of the Anglican Church. My mother's a mutant, my father is a demon. I was born with a gift that has left me with various supernatural abilities ranging from telekinesis to healing, and from bibliomancy to ceremonial magic.


As a young priest, my goal in life is to save people and prevent disaster. I try to do that by working alongside other special people like the New Heroes Union, the Militia, Freedom Phalanx, Vanguard, Longbow and Vindicators.

The building you're looking at sits on a rocky planet called Earth-23 in a far away galaxy to the north of the universe. A long time ago my wife and I were accidentally displaced to this world. We found a way back home but we come back here from time to time.

It's quieter here, peaceful. Good place to go to escape the dangers of Paragon City. Time is different here though, faster. It doesn't bother me. This is my home, Hunters Manor.

CITY
HEROES

ART OF WAR



Is everything alright there Pious?
What are you doing by the armoury?

My meeting with the Art of War is today so I need to choose a costume to wear.

Mummy, how comes daddy has alot of uniforms but I only have one?

Because yours is for elementary school hunny. Daddy's are all for hero work.

Roman Empire, Longbow, New Heroes Union, Vanguard, The Militia, Midnight Squad, Freedom Phalanx and lastly, Medieval Crusades.





My god! Pious put her down, what are you doing?

Wait, what do you mean? I am not doing anything. Dear god!

What's wrong? Oh my god! Help!



Hazel we agreed not to use your powers in front of mummy!

I'm sorry daddy, I didn't mean to.



Pious, I am only going to ask you this once. Is there anything you're not telling me?

It's okay sweetheart. Can you get back down or do you need a hand?

Huh? What? Er what are you talking about?

Fine. I hate to do this to you again babe but I'm going in there myself to find out!



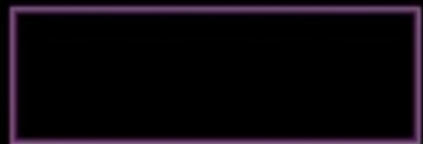
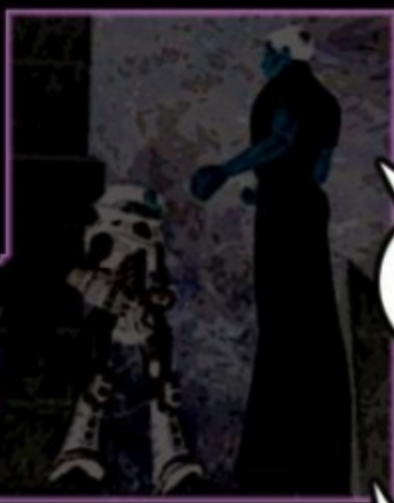
The spirit realm!
You took our four year old
daughter hunting!?

Sweetheart, she
has been gifted. It is
our duty to train her and
raise her to understand
this responsibility.

I know it's pretty
dark in here. Are you
sure you want this?



Yes daddy. I'm
not scared of anything
or anyone but God.



Good girl. Now
remember, Red here is
a combat analysis robot.
He is not an enemy.
Don't hit him.



Dad, I know that!
Last time was a normal
accident and I already
apologised to him.

Alright Hazel
I believe you. Now get
ready, here they come.
Relax your mind and
really focus.





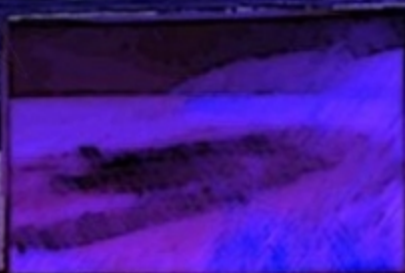
I can't watch any
more of this Pious.
I'm just not happy.

I think its time
for you to go to your
little meeting.


Please just
go Pious.

Art of War Headquarters, Paragon City

May 4th 2009



Welcome
Reverend, to the
Art of War




I'm happy to be here. Always ready to help.

I know. I read your files. I'm Stryke. I usually take operational command from here at base.

It's nice to finally meet you Stryke. In my time at the Gladiators show, your friend Warscythe spoke of you.

That slumdog. I hope he said nice things.




Anyway, on to more pressing matters. Freedom Corps hero files provided us with information linking you to the lady Pistol, one of Arachnos' newest agents.

Alicia Barzini, yes. She was part of the Italian Mafia, married one of my cloned brothers Axel Hunter, for power. She was killed in the Virtueverse by a Tyrone Gar but was later resurrected by demons.

I thought I had killed that particular demon before my Crey kidnapping but the Militia heroes who came to free me faced Pistol and banished the demon. I did recently hear she was working with Arachnos.


That's a hell of a story Reverend. I'd have been happier reading about it from an online comicbook or something, than become a part of it, but Pistol has launched a series of attacks on the Art of War.

And considering your experience dealing with her, we could use your help.




I sent a team into Faultline to question some of the Arachnos agents there but they were ambushed by Pisto's brigade. We have footage of the incident I'd like you to see.


Yeah sure
Lead the way.



Might as well give you a brief tour of the facilities while we're here. This is our transportation room, with telepads.



It's well designed. I like the wooden walls and homely decor. Gargoyles are a nice touch.



Yeah, they're good. Hand-made by a sorcerer friend of ours in London. Keeps out enemies.



Here is the Control Room where it all happens.




This is Eros, our resident demi-god, grandson to the Roman god of thunder, Zeus. Eros has been with us since the second World War and followed us here from England.


The guy is a very good healer but unlike his father, he always falls in battle.

Who is his father?


My father Reverend, is Ares. God of War



I've uploaded
the video footage file
war-ambush.wmv



We'll need to
view it here on the
multiscreen.



Computer. This is
Operations Leader Stryke
ID number zero-four, display
video file war-ambush.wmv
to multiscreen.

File loaded

What you're looking at here is the rescue team arriving by teleport.



As per protocol, the team did not wait for invitations. They charged in guns blazing.



Reverend, let me take this opportunity to introduce you to some of the team, this is Dark Mole. He is a young mutant with potent abilities of the mind, especially empathy.

This is Warscythe. He died as a brave knight centuries ago but was taken into the distant world of Bellum Segmentus and transformed into this armoured creature of war. His blade the Zweihänder, is a sword that assumes any shape. He's well skilled with an indestructible willpower but rumoured to be a herald of evil.



You already know Eros. On the second frame is Blazing Betty. Poor girl woke up in hospital from a motorcycle accident in a mutated fiery mess. Her mutant ability is fire manipulation.



Soul Shift is a naturally good fighter. He also has a mystic tattoo on his body that allows him access to dark magic.



The rescue team fought high. Firing energy.



They fought low. Manipulating the foe's fears.



They fought hot. Flames burning body armour.



They fought hard Reverend, with bloody fists.

But in the end, one of the Arachnos agents got a call through and managed to raise the alarm.



The distraction bought us enough time to fly the trap and uncage but we were buried deep underground with no clear route of escape.


Warscythe's team must have come to rescue us.

Yeah, sounds like it. But we've got to help them help us. Can't figure out a plan yet but it looks like we're underground.

Gee Stryke You don't say.




The sarcastic little man in our red and white uniform is Earthshocks. He was born out of volcanic ash and somehow developed an ability to control earth elements and kinetic energy.

A character in a yellow and white suit with a glowing chest piece, holding a glowing fist.


Hard hitting is Solar Shift, an alien being from the sun. More durable and stronger than man.

Who needs a plan when you can just hit!

Yep. Sounds good to me!

A character in a dark, heavy coat and pants, seen from behind, in a dark, industrial setting.

Leg sweeping is Guarding Dark, a centuries old British sailor, cursed with immortality by an ancient Japanese mystic. He does good to keep his curse sealed and dormant, but the dragon within him lives for evil.

A large, multi-armed alien creature with a glowing blue and purple core, standing in a room with red walls and a red floor. Two other characters are visible: one in a blue suit on the left and one in a white suit with a blue cape on the right.

Starchaser was a gentle art student visiting Paragon City Museum of Art when he felt the presence of a dying alien, a Kheldian, touch his mind. He had a choice, either allow the energy being to fade away entirely, or take it upon himself, merging with it and becoming far more than the sum of his parts. Till today, he is happy to work with the Art of War in league with the Peacebringer Army on Earth

Daylight!
I see an exit,
this way!

Fireballe was the first to get out. She's a young mutant with pyrokinetic powers.

Skorgel Clipsel
You two came to
rescue us?



Nah gurl, War
'n Eros are here too but
dey on de o'der side o'
de camp now.

West Indies born Dontrell De Peralta, is the reincarnation of a deceased Ancient Jamaican spirit named Skorge. After a thousand years of service in the spirit realm, the second world war was his set Day of Release. Half man and half spirt, Skorge now walks the Earth brandishing an arsenal of otherworldly magic. Till today, his loyalty's with the Art of War.

Clipse is one of two cosmic beings from a distant galaxy cluster called Inusivexx. Having failed to save the Inusivexxians from destruction, Clipse and Astrox fled through space in search of a new world in need of saving. They arrived here on planet Earth. Clipse's power is akin to atmospheric mimicry. The spines he is emitting were adapted from a rare toxic element on the marsh-face planet Nusio.

Fun is over
humans. We
are leaving.

We'll be right
behind you Clipse. Right
after we interrogate
this idiot.





End of file
playback

Oh and we took
one of thier ships
just 'cos we can.

We interrogated
that agent for a minute
before he talked.

He revealed that
the commander behind
the attacks on my team
was a new recruit, one
called Pistol.

Now get this.
She was told to hit us
in order to prove her
loyalty and win a shiny
new armour.

Pistol wants
an armour?

I know! Killing us
must be worth, what, a
planet, at least!

Stryke, I
don't think that's
what he means.

Whatever.

Well, I know
where she lives in
the Rogue Isles.

No. She may be evil
but she is still my sister. Let
me go see her, okay? I'll talk
some sense into her.

Good. I knew it
was a good idea bringing you
on board. Give us her address.
Warscythe wants to stick
a big knife in her.

Sisarose Mansion, Etoile Islands.

May 6th 2009



Knock Knock

Hey! Who's there?

Here'tafak!

Err... What?!
Here'tafak who?

Here'tafak YOU
motherfaker!



BOOM!



Felt damn good too.

Now that's what I call breaking and entering.



Alpha team this is Watchtower. Please respond.

Holy shit, Stryke is back online!

Dooooom!

Alright knock it off guys, this is serious. Radio check please.

Reading you five's. Over.



Reading you five's also.

Alpha Team this is Starchaser, confirm status.



Warecythe online!

Fireballe online!

Damsel online!

Eros online!

Hey guys! Fulcrum here. Sorry I'm late, did I miss anything?

Clipse online!

Give us another run down Stryke, Fulc only just arrived.



Fulcyyyyyy! Alright listen up. Pistol hit us in the nuts last week and we're here to return the favour double time.

Reverend Pious being so naive has gone and gotten himself captured by Pistol's men. Now it's up to us to free him.

We've got a visual on him on the third floor office. I'll be your eyes and ears for this operation. Now go kick arsel!

>> Storchaser meet Fulcrum. He is the son of a sorceress. Dark magic runs through his veins to his fists.

And from my fists to your face!

Except unlike me, Fulc can't ever hit anything.

He would miss anything and everything even if it had a sign on it saying 'over here'.

He is the revenge that we all sometimes long for but cannot deliver for fear of crossing the lines drawn up by pathetic bed-wetting liberal officials.

War is only joking Storchaser. Fulcrum has a dark and fearsome exterior but he is an upstanding hero.

He has a strong sense of right and wrong and must see justice served, especially when the Law might protect the criminal while the true victim is persecuted for probably just defending himself. That kind of thing, yknow?

Just wath out for his Achile's heel, his Kryptonite, his Yellow lantern! The enchanted zimner frame footspeed! Building's already burnt to ashes before he finally arrives!



But you know it's true though.

For Inusivexd

Inusivexx?

Alright you lot. Less talking and more hitting. Oh, nice one Clipse.



For Inusivexd

Man shut the fuck up!

Now now boys, mind your language when I'm here.



Screw you Damself

Holy shit!

Holy, you bet, but, shit? I don't think so mister!



Calm the fuck down Tony. It's only psychic levitation!



For Inusivexd!

>> Wow! Wow! Take it easy oh Clipse, the godly being. Way too much blood there. Clean fights!



Alright we got the geeky looking ball-head boss guy down. Which way do we go now?

>> Two left turns along the next corridor! Ha! Your face Pistol, you little biatch. We are in your base.



... Learning all your secrets!

Well I am sorry but whatever secret has her harbouring the Black Scorpion inside her bedroom, I'm not sure I'd like to know.





The Gang
is here!


Everybody
cower in fear!

>> Shit! Guys I said left! You've taken a wrong turn. Damn it all to hell, you got an ambush on your tail. Come on guys, get out of there. You're outnumbered, need to free the Priest before taking on the Black Scorpion.


The names
Naki, don't you
forget it.

In fact, let
me stamp it on
your face!






Accepted into Paragon City's elite Vindicators as a hero. But you had to throw it all away. You betrayed them, and for what? Greed? More money? More power?



You were destined to do good, great and powerful things Alicia. Born into a rich and famous Italian family, educated at Harvard, gifted with mutant force field powers.



Look where that got you. Clinically dead, no heartbeat, no soul, abused by demons, energised by a suit of armour, a borrowed life machine. You are just another puppet of Arachnos now. How does it feel Alicia? Painful isn't it? It's gospel truth Pistol, and as you know, the truth hurts the most.





Urnhi

You're all talk dear brother. Regardless of the paths I have chosen, the most poignant truth is that I am still here. So if you wanna dance, call of yor Art of Dogs and come face me! Oh and speaking of dogs, isn't this your house bitch? Damsel right?



Rachel are you alright? Use your empathy skills and heal, I'm sorry I can't help yet. Seems I'm caged in some kind of strange Nephilim curse.

Fireballe, do something about these mooks.

Roger that Warsycthe. It's boom time!

I can probably heal you, but do try not to burn us, Fireballe.

My god that is hot! Fireballe, did you have to kill them!

There's alot of blood splattered everywhere but they won't die.

Pistol is causing a lot of wreckage. I think she's pissed off.

More healing Eros and less talking, this fight is like a war!

No Damsel. This is an office. I AM WAR!

Okay this is now getting ridiculous!

Oh my god, guys watch out she's gonna-

God damn it! Shit that hurt like a motha!



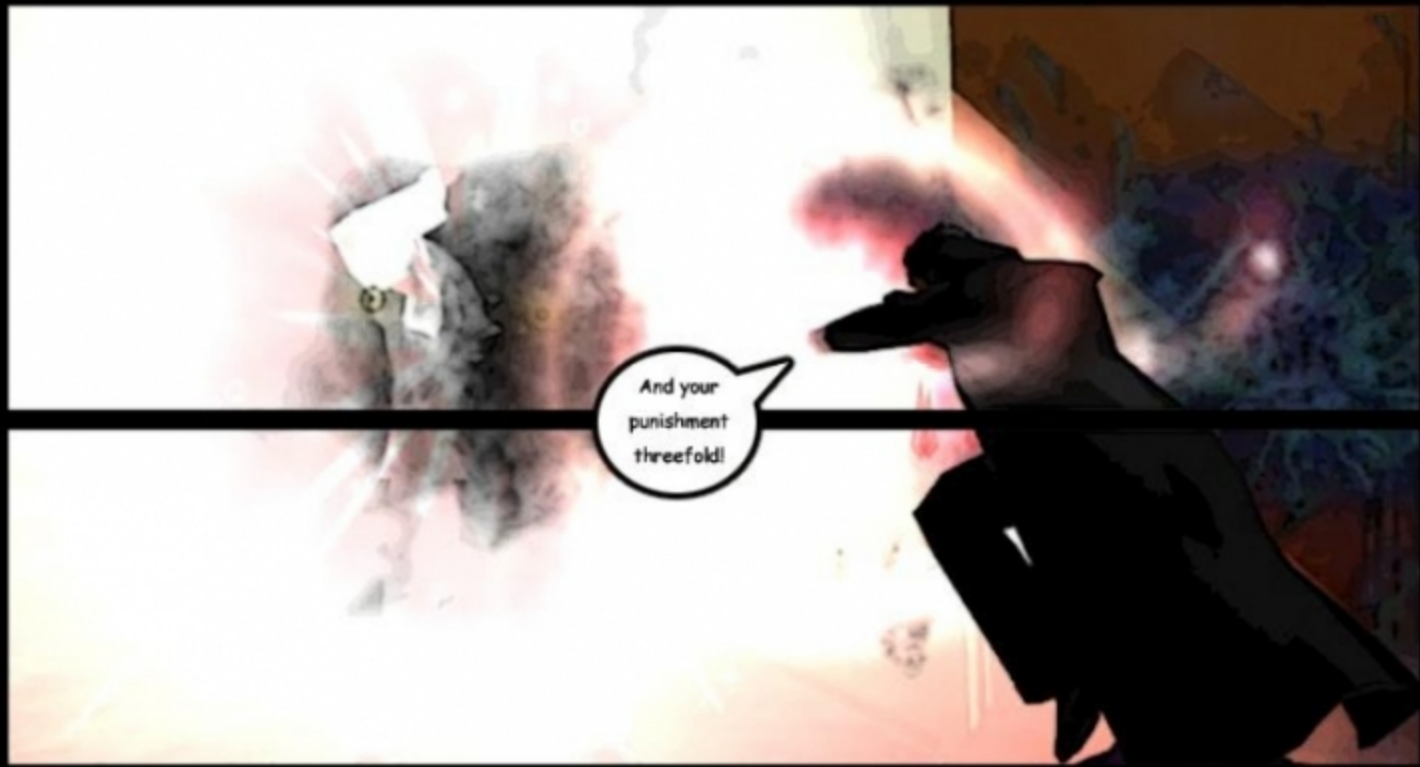
Hey Pious
is free but where
is he going?



You dare hold
the son of Noktil
against his will.



Your penalty
shall greatly
be served.



And your
punishment
threefold!




Wait, wait.
Pious you don't
understand.

I am no longer
interested in anything
you have to say. Your
chance has passed.



Hey stop it!
You've broken my
breastplates!

Hey what can I
say. Those implants
were badly done.



Art of War
strike hard and
strike fast.

Good mettle men,
surely our moment of glory
is at hand, for at last, the
she-beast weakens!

Urnhl!

Rachell

Don't mind
me! I'm okay.
I'm okay.


Really living up
to your name aren't
you Damsel?



It was hard not to feel sorry for her at that particular moment. She begged us to stop.


But we didn't. We piled on the beating.

Because you deserve to feel this pain Alicia and seize your evil ways, once and for all.




But you're destroying
the suit. You've broken the
power source, the shell, even my
armory and the computer unit.
The emergency systems, life
support mainframe...

Pious... you're
killing me.




That's not really a problem at all though, now is it? 'Cos you're already dead.

Besides, there's only one outcome when you try to shit on the Art of War. Yeah, you get all your shit fucked up your arse.



Eat Zweihänder
steel Pistol.



And to make
sure you stay dead
this time, I'm taking
your head.

I'm afraid I can't let
you do that Warscythe.
Please remove that sword
from my sister's chest. She
will be properly buried.



You had no right to kill her Warscythe.

Were you just in my head holy man?

Where did the body go?

She was a walking dead and you know it. Doesn't your Bible say something about the dead should remaining dead or are you now too emotionally conflicted to see it?

Holy shit!



You killed her!
You murdering scumbags!

I swear to God if the boss is dead you'll regret ever being born!

Gang, fall in!
Tony, tell the Black Scorpion I've found the intruders!



I got her pinned.
She aint going nowhere
but dreamland.



Way to warn us
there Watchtower.
Good to see you got
our backs on this.

Watchtower?
Watchtower respond!
Anybody there?

Strykel This
is Fulcrum, do
you copy?



ALONE!


By Zeus's
thunder!

Oh yes, Pistol talks
very much of you Father
but alas, it'll take more
than that to best me.


Ahhhh!

Oh whats the matter?
Weren't expecting an
attack from behind?


You ordered Pistol
to launch those attacks
on my friends. You're the
villain behind the villain.
You don't get to die.




Watch out, he's coming down hard!




Alright, mission accomplished guys. Lets go home.



Come on Priest we're done here. Gotta get out.



Hey guys, sorry about that. I was away from the keyboard. Had to go pee. So what'd I miss? Is Pistol out? Hello?



Hello? War? Fulcrum? Anybody there?

Pious? Fire? Damsel? Anybody there?
Ah screw you guys. I'll just download
the comic. Watchtower signing out!

END

That was
pretty mean of you
guys, ignoring him
like that.

Don't worry
Damsel, he's
used to it.

What's his story
anyway? How did he
get his powers?

Stryke? Wasn't he
a pilot in the RAF once?
He crashlanded in the
Rogue Isles I think.

Yeah. Dr Aeon
held him and used him in
some crazy experiments
for bio-energy.

Back then Stryke went
by his real name Scott Tyrell.
He had a rare condition that caused
rapid metabolism and swift reflexes.
Aeon fused him up with torrents of
energy, turned him into a living
battery. He escaped though.

And he totally
wants Aeon to go
down for it.





Sometimes I have to concentrate or you go all fuzzy and then black and white.



I've recovered the body and made all the necessary arrangements.



I am better now. I can hear you clearly, I can see what you are doing, right now, anywhere.


Like I always say, no job is impossible with the right amount of green. So, you just got yourself a deal.

Good. I'll need a complete replica of the arming systems by next week. The host will be ready by then.

These new guns, you're asking me for, you said they would be for Pistol, but last I heard, she died.

She was, until I turned her.

Fuck sake Bathory, last thing a world needs is a vampire with a big mouth, bad attitude and lots of big fucking guns.



Rumour is that Pistol has some friends in very high places. A universal body known to us here on Earth as the Midnight Illuminati.

By helping Pistol now, we can use her later, force her to reveal them to us. Now then, will I see the Corporation at Mechano's meeting?

TO BE CONTINUED...

#5 NEW WORLD ALLIANCE

