

# GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN



City of  
**CC**  
Comic Creators  
ISSUE 17  
2010



SPOTLIGHT ON... John Cole **in THE**



OKAY... SO THIS IS  
WHAT THE HEART OF  
EVIL LOOKS LIKE...



*PARAGON CITY: THE CITY OF HEROES! THE ONLY PLACE IN THE WORLD WHERE THE HERO-TO-PROBLEM RATIO IS ALMOST ONE-TO-ONE. IF YOU NEED A HERO IN THIS CITY, YOU JUST HAVE TO LOOK AROUND THE CORNER.*

*BUT NOT ALL HEROES ARE THE SAME. SOME ARE MORE MERCENARY THAN THE OTHERS. BUT THERE ARE SOME WHO SEE THE CALLING AS A SIGN OF BRIGHTER DAYS AHEAD FOR ALL MANKIND. THESE ARE THE HEROES WHO FIGHT FOR SOMETHING BETTER. THEY ARE THE...*

# GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN



**NAME:**  
JOHN COLE/  
WIDOWMAKER

**REAL NAME:** JOHN  
COLE

**STATUS:**  
FREELANCER/  
FORMER  
ARACHNOS AGENT

**ARCHETYPE:**  
ARACHNOS WIDOW

**PRIMARY POWER:**  
WIDOW CLAWS

**SECONDARY POWER:**  
TEAMWORK

THANKS TO A RECENT BREACH IN SECURITY BY OPERATIVES LOYAL TO SHADOWBORN, KEY SECRETS ABOUT THE PERSONAL LIVES OF THE GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN ARE SCHEDULED TO BE AUCTIONED OFF IN THE ROGUE ISLES TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER.

EAGER TO RECOVER THIS INFORMATION QUICKLY BEFORE THE WRONG PEOPLE LEARN THEIR SECRETS, THE GUARDIANS HAVE TO RELY ON ALLIES IN THIS RENEGADE "CITY OF VILLAINS".

Guardians of the Dawn Spotlight #17 is created using original characters in the City of Heroes Multiplayer Online Roleplaying Game. Copyright © 2004-2010 This story is an independent derivative work of the City of Heroes Game. All original rights are reserved by NCsoft and Paragon Studios. NCSoft, the interlocking NC logo, Paragon Studios, City of Heroes, City of Villains, and all associated logos and designs are trademarks or registered trademarks of NCsoft Corporation and Paragon Studios. Cryptic Studios is a trademark of Cryptic Studios, Inc. All other trademarks are property of their respective owners.



GRANDVILLE, ROGUE ISLES

RULING CAPITAL OF THE ROGUE ISLES AND HEART OF THE ARACHNOS ORGANIZATION.

"THROUGH MY WAY, THE WAY OF VILLAINY, YOU CAN HAVE WHAT YOU WANT NOW!

"YOU CAN LEAVE THE WEAK LYING IN YOUR WAKE AS YOU GRASP WITH BOTH HANDS THE GLORIOUS FUTURE OF HAVOC!

"THE HEROES ARE DOOMED!"

"JOIN ME NOW OR YOU WILL SUFFER THE SAME FATE THAT AWAITS ALL THOSE WHO DEFY ME!

"I, LORD RECLUSE, SHALL COVER THIS PLANET IN DARKNESS!"\*

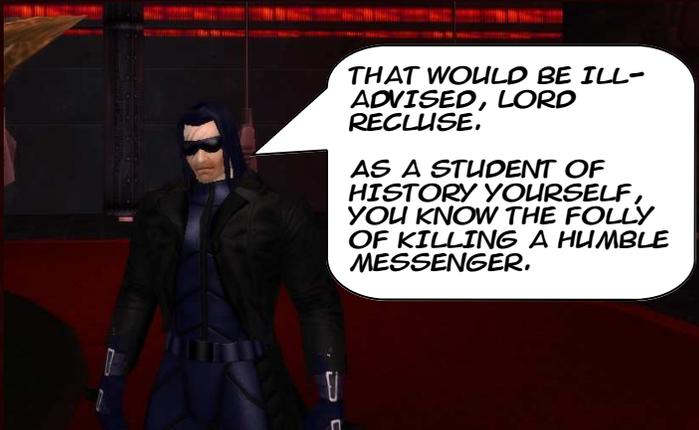
(\*FROM THE ACTUAL PROPAGANDA MESSAGES HEARD IN GRANDVILLE)

LORD RECLUSE'S TOWER

I DO NOT KNOW HOW YOU MANAGED TO FIND YOUR WAY HERE, BUT I AM FEELING GENEROUS TODAY.

YOU HAVE ONE MINUTE TO EXPLAIN YOURSELF BEFORE I FLAY THE FLESH FROM YOUR BONES AND FEED THEM TO THE ARACHNOIDS BELOW.

 LORD RECLUSE

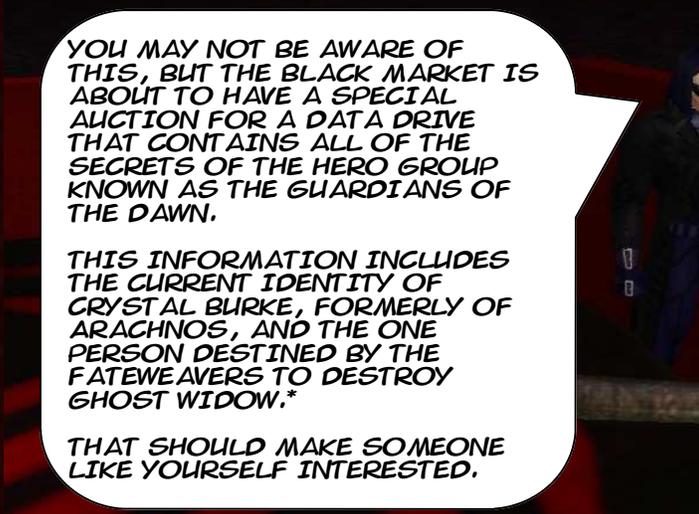


THAT WOULD BE ILL-ADVISED, LORD RECLUSE.

AS A STUDENT OF HISTORY YOURSELF, YOU KNOW THE FOLLY OF KILLING A HUMBLE MESSENGER.



FORTY-FIVE SECONDS.



YOU MAY NOT BE AWARE OF THIS, BUT THE BLACK MARKET IS ABOUT TO HAVE A SPECIAL AUCTION FOR A DATA DRIVE THAT CONTAINS ALL OF THE SECRETS OF THE HERO GROUP KNOWN AS THE GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN.

THIS INFORMATION INCLUDES THE CURRENT IDENTITY OF CRYSTAL BURKE, FORMERLY OF ARACHNOS, AND THE ONE PERSON DESTINED BY THE FATEWEAVERS TO DESTROY GHOST WIDOW.\*

THAT SHOULD MAKE SOMEONE LIKE YOURSELF INTERESTED.



YOU HAVE TWO MORE MINUTES TO LIVE.

CONTINUE.

( SEE ISSUE #8 )



MY EMPLOYER, WHO ALSO IS SPONSORING THE AUCTION, HAS LEARNED THAT THE GUARDIANS ARE PLANNING TO INVADE THE ROGUE ISLES TO RETRIEVE THE DRIVE.



IN FACT, MY EMPLOYER FIRMLY BELIEVES THAT THEIR MOST POWERFUL MEMBER, GALATEA POWERS, IS ALREADY HERE, DISGUISED AS ONE OF YOUR "DESTINED ONES".



BAH! YOUR EMPLOYER APPARENTLY UNDERESTIMATES MY MIGHT. I AM LORD RECLUSE! I AM AN INCARNATE! I AM A GOD AMONGST ANTS!

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, LORD RECLUSE, MY EMPLOYER HAS MEASURED THE HIDDEN POTENTIAL OF GALATEA POWERS.

IT IS BELIEVED THAT SHE IS, FROM BIRTH, POTENTIALLY ALSO AN INCARNATE-LEVEL BEING.

IT DOES NOT MATTER WHAT HER POTENTIAL "COULD" BE. SHE IS NOT AN INCARNATE, THEREFORE SHE IS NOT CAPABLE OF POSING A RISK TO MYSELF OR TO MY RULE OVER THE ISLES.

HOWEVER THE OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN VALUABLE INFORMATION ABOUT THE GUARDIANS INTRIGUES ME. WOULD YOUR EMPLOYER BE WILLING TO MEET TO DISCUSS A DIRECT PURCHASE OF THIS DRIVE?



SADLY, THAT IS NOT AN ARRANGEMENT I CAN MAKE ON YOUR BEHALF.

MY EMPLOYER HAS REASONS FOR THIS AUCTION TO GO ON AS SCHEDULED. I WAS SENT HERE ONLY TO MAKE YOU AWARE OF THE POTENTIAL RISK, AND TO GIVE YOU AN OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE PART IN THE AUCTION FOR YOUR OWN GAIN, SHOULD YOU DEEM SUCH KNOWLEDGE WORTHY OF YOUR NOTICE.

OH, AND FOR THE RECORD, LORD RECLUSE, MY FLESH WOULD NOT BE VERY APPETIZING TO YOUR ARACHNOIDS. I AM, AFTER ALL, A WARSHADE KHELDIAN.



THEN I WILL LET YOU LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO LEAVE MY LANDS AND RELAY THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO YOUR "EMPLOYER"...

I WILL BE PAYING CLOSE ATTENTION TO THIS AUCTION, AND SHOULD I DEEM THE INFORMATION WORTHY, MY ARBITERS WILL DO EVERYTHING IN THEIR POWER TO ACQUIRE THE DRIVE.

AND IF I EVER DETECT THE STENCH OF YOUR NICTUS ENERGY IN MY LANDS EVER AGAIN, THEN IT WILL BE THE LAST DAY OF YOUR EXTENDED LIFE.

AEON CITY, CAP AU DIABLE

"GOOD MORNING CITIZENS OF THE ROGUE ISLES! YOU'RE LISTENING TO WSPDR RADIO, THE OFFICIAL SOURCE FOR ALL NEWS WORTHY OF ARACHNOS! ALL PRAISE LORD RECLUSE!"

"RUMORS ARE FLYING HERE AT WSPDR NEWS ROOM ABOUT A SECRET AUCTION SOON TO BE HELD THAT HAS EVERYONE, EVEN THE TYRANTS OF PARAGON CITY, ON EDGE."

## "FACADES"

- A CITY OF HEROES/VILLAINS  
STORY BY DAVID 2

"OF COURSE WE CAN NEITHER CONFIRM OR DENY SUCH AN AUCTION EVEN HAPPENING, BUT WHAT IS WORTH REPORTING IS THAT APPARENTLY IT HAS SPARKED A MODEST INVASION OF THE ROGUE ISLES BY A CAPE-AND-COWL GROUP CALLED THE GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN!"

**"LOYAL CITIZENS OF THE ROGUE ISLES ARE ASKED TO PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO THEIR NEIGHBORS AND ASSOCIATES AND BE AWARE OF ANY STRANGE BEHAVIORS THEY MAY EXHIBIT."**

**"HAVE THEY CHANGED THEIR COSTUMES RECENTLY? STARTED ASKING BIZARRE QUESTIONS? DID THEY SUDDENLY FORGET SCHEDULED DATES?"**

**"IF YOU SUSPECT SOMEONE TO BE A SECRET AGENT OF PARAGON CITY, DO NOT HESITATE! NOTIFY YOUR NEAREST ARACHNOS AGENT!"**



HELLO? ARBITER HOT LINE?

THIS IS INFORMANT NUMBER CCL3579...

**"REMEMBER; FAILURE TO DO YOUR PART AS A CITIZEN OF THE ROGUE ISLES COULD HAVE DIRE CONSEQUENCES TO YOU AND EVEN TO YOUR LOVED ONES."**

I WANT TO REPORT A HERO SIGHTING.

I JUST SAW GALATEA POWERS IN AEON CITY.

**HAVEN DISTRICT**

CAP AU DIABLE... FRENCH FOR "CAPE OF THE DEVIL".

SINCE MOUNT DIABLE GOT ITS NAME FROM THE TWO HORN-LIKE PROTRUSIONS, THE LAND TO THE WEST OF IT WAS SEEN LIKE ITS CAPE, HENCE IT'S NAME.

IT'S A MIX OF BEFORE-AND-AFTER. MOST OF IT BEFORE ARACHNOS, AND THEN THE MIDDLE IS CLEARLY ALL ARACHNOS.

GOLDBRIKERS, FAMILY, VAHZILOK, LUDDITES, AND ARACHNOS ALL FIGHT FOR CONTROL OF THIS PLACE.

BUT IF YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING, YOU CAN PRETTY MUCH KEEP OUT OF TROUBLE AND MAKE A DECENT LIVING FOR YOURSELF AROUND HERE.

AND GIVEN HOW ARACHNOS REALLY TURNED SOME OF THE OTHER COLONIAL ISLES TO CR@P...

THIS PLACE IS PRETTY MUCH AS CLOSE TO PARADISE AS YOU CAN FIND AROUND HERE.

I SHOULD KNOW...  
I WAS BORN AND RAISED HERE.

**\*CLICK\***

PLEASE LEAVE A MESSAGE AT THE BEEP AND I WILL GET BACK WITH YOU.

**\*BEEP!\***

SHELLY? ARE YOU THERE?

IT'S JOHN. I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU HAD TODAY OFF.

THE BOAT IS STOCKED AND READY, SO ALL THAT I'M REALLY MISSING HERE IS YOU.

SHELLY, I KNOW YOU WERE REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS DAY OFF, SO IF SOMETHING CAME UP, PLEASE LET ME KNOW, OKAY?

I CAN'T KEEP THE BOAT HERE INDEFINITELY WITHOUT HAVING TO BEAT UP SOME GOLDBRICKERS FOR MORE MOORING TIME.

WOMEN!

YOU'D THINK THAT I'D KNOW BETTER GIVEN MY WORK HISTORY.

THERE AREN'T THAT MANY GUYS THAT COULD SAY THEY WERE THE FIRST MALE WIDOW AGENTS IN ARACHNOS.

FRAG IT...

I KNOW I'M GOING TO REGRET DOING THIS...

BUT I HAVE A FEELING I KNOW WHERE SHE IS.

WOMEN MAY SEEM TO BE UNPREDICTABLE, BUT THEY ARE JUST AS MUCH CREATURES OF HABIT AS MEN.

AND WHEN SHELLY IS UPSET ABOUT SOMETHING, SHE GOES TO THE ONE PLACE WHERE SHE CAN VENT HER FRUSTRATIONS...

NAMELY ON HER PATIENTS.

I FIGURED I'D FIND YOU HERE...  
I THOUGHT WE HAD A DATE TODAY.  
YOU KNOW... YOU... ME... A BOAT... STRING BIKINIS... NO CELLPHONES...

HELLO? JOHN COLE?  
ALSO KNOWN AS YOUR BOYFRIEND?

DRONE: PLAY MESSAGE NUMBER FIVE FOR MISTER COLE.

**DR. SHELLY PERCEY**

PLAYING...

"SHELLY, THIS IS MATT. I KNOW HE'S TURNED ME OFF, BUT YOU NEED TO SEND HIM TO ME ASAP. HE'LL KNOW WHY."

YOU SAID YOU WERE DONE WITH THEM.

I WAS... A LONG TIME AGO.

MATTHEW BURKE DOESN'T CALL ME UNLESS HE'S LOOKING FOR YOU! THAT MEANS YOU'RE NOT DONE WITH THEM.

IT MEANS YOU'RE NOT DONE WITH HER EITHER!

WHAT?? SHELLY, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

CRYSTAL BURKE IS GONE! I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW SHE WAS BACK IN THE ISLES UNTIL AFTER SHE LEFT AGAIN!\*

I DON'T KNOW WHY HER BROTHER WOULD BE CALLING ME AGAIN, BUT I SERIOUSLY DOUBT THAT IT WOULD REALLY BE ABOUT HER!

I KNOW I LOST THIS ARGUMENT EVEN BEFORE I ARRIVED.

BUT I STILL HAD TO PUT UP THE EFFORT... OR ELSE WE WOULD BE THROUGH.

(\*ISSUE #8... AGAIN)

THERE ARE THREE WONDERS IN THE ROGUE ISLES...

MOUNT DIABLE...

GHOST OF SCRAPYARD...

AND SHELLY IN A STRING BIKINI...

CALL HIM.

SHELLY...

CALL HIM D@MNIT!

GUESS WHICH ONE I HAVEN'T SEEN YET.

MATT... JOHN COLE...

I SEE... NO, I UNDERSTAND.

YOU ALREADY ACTIVATED IT? YEAH, I SUPPOSE YOU WOULD.

OKAY, I'M ON MY WAY.

I... I'M SORRY...

I REALLY WANTED FOR US TO GET AWAY FROM ALL THIS FOR JUST ONE DAY!

OUR LIVES DON'T WORK LIKE THAT, JOHN.

I WISH THEY DID.

BUT YOU KNOW THE OLD SAYING:

\*YOU'RE NEVER THROUGH WITH ARACHNOS UNTIL YOU'RE LESS THAN DUST.\*

\*bzzzzz...\*

\*BOOM!\*

AND EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT WITH ARACHNOS ANYMORE, THE SAYING STILL APPLIES FOR OUR LINES OF WORK.

SO... GO... DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE.

THE BOAT AND THE STRING BIKINIS CAN WAIT.

JOHN COLE

HAVEN AIRFIELD

EVEN MOUNT DIABLE SEEMS TO BE UPSET.

UNFORTUNATELY EVEN THAT WOULDN'T STOP THE TRANSPORT TO MERCY.

I HATE IT WHEN SHE'S RIGHT.

I KNEW WE'D BE SEEING YOU IN UNIFORM AGAIN WITH ALL OF THE HERO RUMORS GOING ABOUT.

WELCOME BACK, WIDOWMAKER.

I'M NOT BACK, AND MY NAME IS JOHN COLE.

I STOPPED BEING WIDOWMAKER YEARS AGO.

DOESN'T MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I SAY THAT, THEY'LL NEVER BELIEVE IT.

THEY SEE THE UNIFORM AND THEY KNOW I'M BACK.

MERCY ISLAND

I HATE COMING BACK HERE.

IT'S AN ISLAND THAT IS SLOWING DYING. AND THERE'S NOTHING THAT WILL SAVE IT.

UNFORTUNATELY, GHOST WIDOW USES THIS AS HER HOME, SO AS LONG AS SHE DOES, THIS PLACE WILL CONTINUE TO WITHER.

ONCE UPON A TIME, MERCY ISLAND WAS MY HOME.

MY BEST FRIEND FROM THOSE YEARS WAS CRYSTAL BURKE.

SHE JOINED ARACHNOS NOT LONG AFTER I DID. AND IT SEEMED TO BE DESTINY THAT THE FATEWEAVERS WOULD PUT US TOGETHER IN THE FIELD.

AND THEN SHE VANISHED. SHE DISAPPEARED. NO REASON WHY, JUST THAT SHE WAS GONE.

BUT EVEN AFTER SHE LEFT, SHE STILL REACHES OUT THROUGH HER OLDER ADOPTED BROTHER.



JOHN...

THANKS FOR COMING TO SEE ME.

BELIEVE ME, I WOULDN'T HAVE CALLED YOU IF IT WASN'T IMPORTANT.



**MATTHEW BURKE**



YOU WOULD HAVE ONLY CALLED ME IF IT INVOLVED YOUR ADOPTED SISTER.

I'M GUESSING IT HAS TO DO WITH THE BIG "AUCTION" AND THE RUMORS OF HEROES SHOWING UP ALL OVER THE PLACE.

PRETTY MUCH, YEAH.

IT'S HER GROUP'S SECRETS ON A DATA DRIVE THAT IS UP FOR BIDDING.

OBVIOUSLY SHE CAN'T BE HERE TO RETRIEVE THE ITEM HERSELF... THE MOMENT SHE COMES NEAR THIS PLACE GHOST WIDOW WOULD TRY TO KILL HER AGAIN.



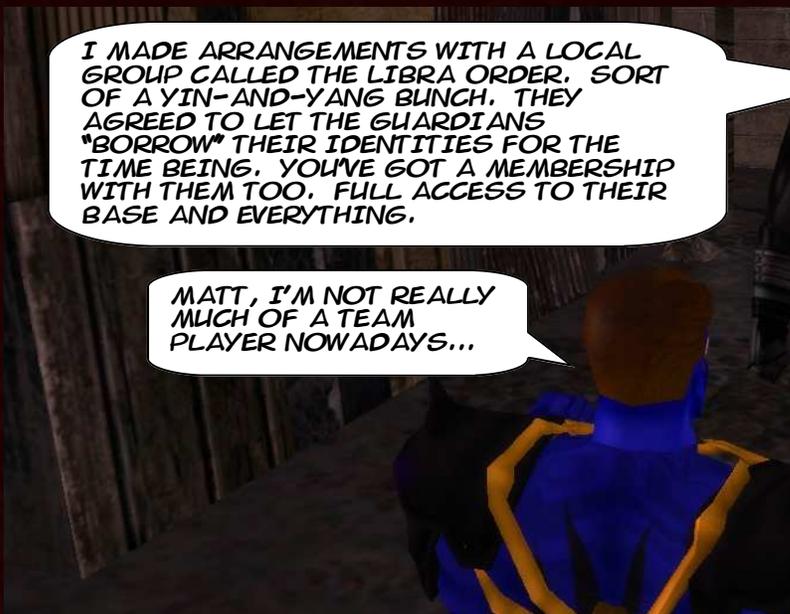
OR WORSE... GHOST WIDOW COULD FORCE CRYSTAL TO KILL HER, WHICH WOULD DESTROY ARACHNOS AND THE ROGUE ISLES AT THE SAME TIME, AND THEN WE'D ALL BE DEAD. D@MNED MU PROPHECY!



SO YOU WANT ME TO STEAL IT FOR HER.

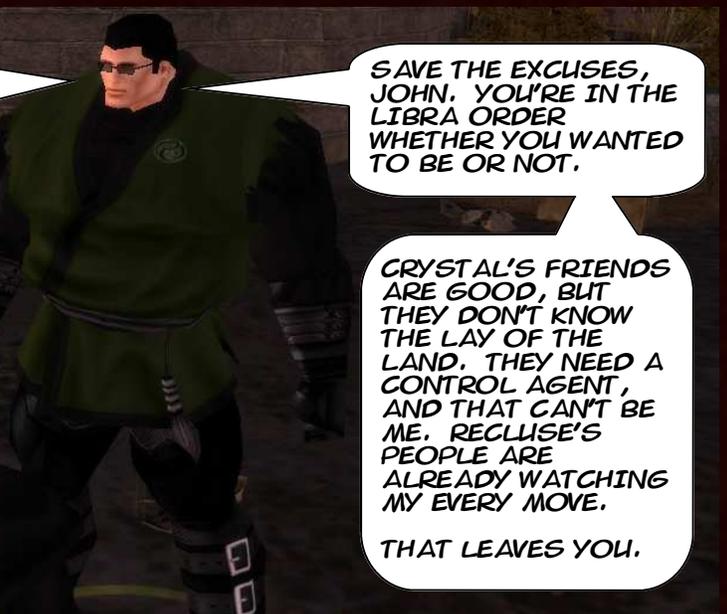
NOT QUITE.

HER TEAMMATES ARE ALREADY HERE AND ARE IN DISGUISES, BUT SOMEONE ALREADY TIPPED OFF ARACHNOS ABOUT IT.



I MADE ARRANGEMENTS WITH A LOCAL GROUP CALLED THE LIBRA ORDER. SORT OF A YIN-AND-YANG BUNCH. THEY AGREED TO LET THE GUARDIANS "BORROW" THEIR IDENTITIES FOR THE TIME BEING. YOU'VE GOT A MEMBERSHIP WITH THEM TOO. FULL ACCESS TO THEIR BASE AND EVERYTHING.

MATT, I'M NOT REALLY MUCH OF A TEAM PLAYER NOWADAYS...



SAVE THE EXCUSES, JOHN. YOU'RE IN THE LIBRA ORDER WHETHER YOU WANTED TO BE OR NOT.

CRYSTAL'S FRIENDS ARE GOOD, BUT THEY DON'T KNOW THE LAY OF THE LAND. THEY NEED A CONTROL AGENT, AND THAT CAN'T BE ME. RECLUSE'S PEOPLE ARE ALREADY WATCHING MY EVERY MOVE.

THAT LEAVES YOU.

I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN BE THIS "CONTROL AGENT" YOU WANT ME TO BE FOR THEM.

IF IT WAS CRYSTAL, SURE, WE'VE WORKED TOGETHER IN THE PAST.

BUT I DON'T KNOW ANY OF THE OTHER GUARDIANS, AND BESIDES, WE'RE TALKING HEROES. HOW WILL I KNOW IF THEY WILL DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

BEST WAY TO LEARN IS ON-THE-JOB.

YOU JUST HAVE TO MAKE SURE THAT THEY AREN'T PUT IN A SITUATION WHERE EITHER CRYSTAL OR HER BOSS, MAXIMUS REX, HAVE TO SHOW UP TO ESCALATE THINGS.

I KNOW WHAT HAPPENS WITH CRYSTAL IF SHE HAS TO COME BACK HERE...

BUT WHAT ABOUT THIS MAXIMUS REX GUY?

WHAT WOULD BE THE CONSEQUENCES?

REMEMBER WHEN THE USSR TRIED TO NLIKE STATESMAN IN 1976 AND START WORLD WAR III?

DO I REALLY HAVE TO EXPLAIN ANY FURTHER?

NO, HE DIDN'T. I GOT THE PICTURE.

LIKE IT OR NOT, I'M A PART OF ANOTHER TEAM WITH A JOB TO FINISH.

AND I CAN'T DO THAT STILL DRESSED AS AN ARACHNOS WIDOW.

TIME TO VISIT THE HIDEAWAY.

TALOS ISLAND, PARAGON CITY, USA

GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN HEADQUARTERS

OKAY, I JUST GOT WORD THAT YOUR CONTROL AGENT IS ALMOST READY.

KATIE, ARE YOU IN POSITION?

JUS' 'BOLT... CAN'T SAY I CARE FOR THIS GIRL'S CHOICE OF CLOTHES, THOUGH.

CAN'T BE HELPED, YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE CLOSE TO HER AGE.

YEH? WOL, NEXT TIME YOU GET TO HINDER HALF YOUR POWERS AN' PRANCE AROUND LOOKING LIKE AN EMO ROLLER QUEEN.

AND NEXT TIME YOU CAN ESCAPE FROM A DEATH BATTLE WITH GHOST WIDOW IN NOTHING BUT YOUR UNDERWEAR. DEAL?



MIDNIGHT ARACHNIA

OKAY, FINE...  
SERIOUSLY, THOUGH?  
DOWN T' YER SKIVVIES?

ARACHNOS OFFICE, PORT OAKS

UM.. HI...

 LYON POWERS / ISEA 

HAD A QUESTION...

SORRY, I  
JUST  
WORK ON  
RECLUSE'S  
VICTORY  
STATS.

ALTHOUGH I  
REALLY WISH I  
COULD BE  
SUPERVISING THE  
AUCTION!

DO TELL!

WELL, YEAH, BECAUSE  
THE SERVERS WILL  
PROBABLY BE REALLY  
CLOGGED WITH ALL OF  
THE MARKETS HAVING  
ACCESS... PLUS OUR NEW  
TIE-IN WITH  
WENTWORTH'S THAT IS  
STILL SORT OF HUSH-  
HUSH... THEY DIDN'T  
WANT IT RELEASED  
UNTIL AFTER THE  
AUCTION AND ALL...

REALLY? YOU  
MEAN THE  
AMERICANS  
CAN TAKE PART  
TOO? HOW  
ARE THEY ABLE  
TO DO THAT?

**ZIP IT GILES!**  
YOU'VE GOT ENOUGH  
ON YOUR HANDS AS  
IS WITH YOUR  
CURRENT  
ASSIGNMENT!  
YOU KNOW BETTER  
THAN TO GIVE OUT  
SENSITIVE  
INFORMATION TO  
ONE OF THE  
"DESTINED ONES"!

AND YOU, ISEA, GET YOUR  
FROST-BURNED BUTT AWAY  
FROM MY TECH PEOPLE  
BEFORE I HAVE YOU  
DETAINED FOR  
SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOR!

OKAY! OKAY!  
I'M GOING!

**CRIPES, IT JUST GOT  
WORSE... NOW THAT THE  
BADDIES IN PARAGON  
CITY CAN TAKE PART IN  
THE AUCTION THROUGH  
WENTWORTH'S.**

**FRAG IT!** IT'S JUST GETTING MORE AND MORE COMPLICATED AS IT GOES!

NOW WE HAVE TWO OBJECTIVES: RETRIEVE THE DATA, AND MAKE SURE THE CRIME LORDS IN PARAGON CITY DON'T GET IN ON IT.

STILL TRYING TO FINISH THINGS TWO STEPS AHEAD OF YOU HUH, CRYSTAL?

**JOHN!**

SORRY IT TOOK SO LONG GETTING IN TOUCH... JUST GOT THE HIDEAWAY CONFIGURED.

WELL IT'S TECHNICALLY YOUR OPERATION. YOU'RE THE ON-SITE CONTROL SINCE I HAVE TO STAY IN AMERICA.

**"HIDEAWAY", PORT OAKS**

THANK YOU FOR ACKNOWLEDGING THAT, CRYSTAL.

OKAY PLAYERS, LISTEN UP... THIS IS JOHN COLE.

ADJUST YOUR COMMUNICATION FREQUENCY TO LIMA-OCTOBER SEVEN-THREE. THAT'S THE LIBRA ORDER'S PRIVATE CHANNEL. YOU'RE IN THE ISLES NOW... TIME TO START OPERATING LIKE YOU'RE FROM HERE.

HATE TO PULL RANK ON YOU LIKE THIS, CRYSTAL... BUT YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO THAT THE ONLY WAY YOUR PEOPLE WILL SURVIVE THIS IS IF IT'S SEEN AS AN INTERNAL OPERATION.

I UNDERSTAND, JOHN.

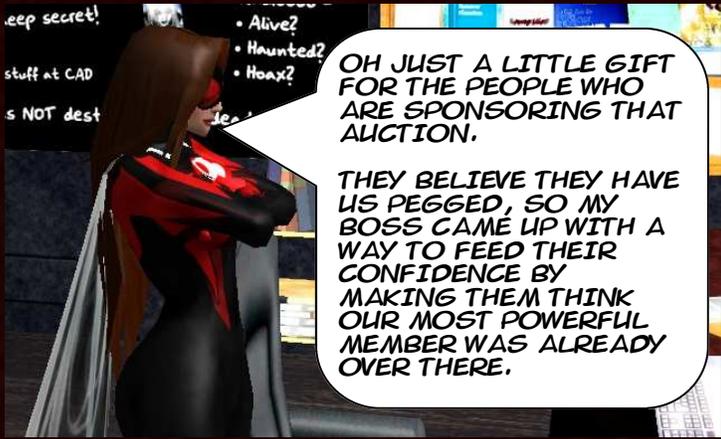
AND IT'S GOOD SEEING YOU AGAIN, EVEN IF IT'S FOR ONLY A FEW MINUTES.

HEY, IS THAT WHERE I THINK YOU ARE?

GLAD YOU REMEMBERED. NEVER REALLY COULD TURN DOWN A GOOD HIDEAWAY, EVEN IF IT CAME FROM A RAID ON LONGBOW.

DON'T WORRY, WE'LL DO EVERYTHING TO MAKE SURE THAT THE DATA DRIVE IS RETRIEVED BEFORE THE AUCTION.

MEANTIME, WHAT'S THIS I HEAR ABOUT A RED HERRING PLAY?



Keep secret!  
stuff at CAD  
s NOT dest

- Alive?
- Haunted?
- Hoax?

OH JUST A LITTLE GIFT FOR THE PEOPLE WHO ARE SPONSORING THAT AUCTION.

THEY BELIEVE THEY HAVE US PEGGED, SO MY BOSS CAME UP WITH A WAY TO FEED THEIR CONFIDENCE BY MAKING THEM THINK OUR MOST POWERFUL MEMBER WAS ALREADY OVER THERE.



\*NINNI!

\*Koff-koff!

SURRENDER HERO!

WE KNOW THAT YOU'RE REALLY GALATEA POWERS!



FOR THE LAST TIME, I AM NOT THAT BLOND-HAIRED BIMBO!



\*OOF!\*

\*SLICE!\*



OF COURSE WE DID NUDGE THINGS JUST A LITTLE BIT...



HMM...

ACCORDING TO THIS SCANNER, YOUR DNA MATCHES WHAT WE HAVE ON YOUR FILE.



I'M SORRY, BUT WE WERE GETTING REPORTS THAT GALATEA POWERS WAS SPOTTED IN THE AREA, AND OBVIOUSLY YOU BEAR A SLIGHT RESEMBLANCE TO HER...



YEAH, WELL WHOEVER STARTED THAT PARTICULAR RUMOR WILL LIVE TO REGRET IT, I PROMISE YOU THAT MUCH!

AND IT'LL START WITH THE PERSON THAT GAVE ME A FREE VIP MAKEOVER OVER AT POCKET D!

I SWEAR THE NEXT TIME I'M THERE, I'M GOING TO RIP THAT TAILOR PIECE BY PIECE UNTIL SHE TELLS ME WHO CONVINCED HER TO HAVE MY HAIR CUT LIKE THAT BLONDE MEGA-BIMBO!



TIKI LOUNGE, POCKET D

EARLIER THAT DAY...

SO... HOW DID IT GO?

OH, JUST LIKE YOU SAID IT WOULD...

SHE OBJECTED TO THE HAIR STYLE, BUT ONCE I TOLD HER ABOUT AERODYNAMICS, SHE WENT WITH IT.

TRINA THE BODY SCULPTRESS

YOU KNOW, IT WAS REALLY NICE OF YOU TO GIVE HER A FREE VIP MAKEOVER LIKE THAT JUST OUT OF THE BLUE.

I GUESS BEING A MANAGER-IN-TRAINING HAS ITS PERKS, HUH?

THIS IS KARA... THE RED HERRING IS IN PLAY.

GALATEA POWERS

PRESENTLY...

YOU STILL CAN BE REALLY DEVILOUS, YOU KNOW THAT, RIGHT?

OKAY, WITH THAT, I NEED TO SPEAK WITH THE TEAM, SO WE HAVE TO CLOSE OUT THIS CHANNEL FOR NOW.

Gods - Keep secret

RIGHT...

GOOD HEARING FROM YOU AGAIN, JOHN.

WE'LL STAND BY FOR THE NEXT PHASE.

NOW YOU CAN SEE HOW SHELLY CAN BE JEALOUS OF HER.

OKAY PLAYERS... LISTEN UP.

I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU A QUICK TUTORIAL ON LIFE IN THE ISLES THAT CRYSTAL PROBABLY DIDN'T GET A CHANCE TO EXPLAIN...

UNLESS YOU'RE AN ARBITER, YOU'RE CONSIDERED A "DESTINED ONE"... SOMEONE WHO IS "DESTINED" TO TAKE OVER FOR LORD RECLUSE IN THE FUTURE. THAT MAKES YOU A TARGET, EVEN IF YOU'RE SPORTING AN ARACHNOS LOGO.

IF YOU'RE SPORTING FRESH INJURIES, IT'S PROBABLY NOT BECAUSE YOUR COVER HAS BEEN BLOWN. IT'S JUST TUESDAY...

HAVING SAID THAT... EVEN THOUGH LORD RECLUSE "RULES" THE ISLES, THERE IS A HIERARCHY BEYOND THAT OF ARACHNOS THAT REALLY KEEPS THE ISLES GOING.

THAT HIERARCHY IS WHAT RUNS THE BLACK MARKET.

TO GET THEIR ATTENTION, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DO SOME STRATEGIC HITS.

THIS IS KATIE... UH... "ISEA"... DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH YOU PICKED UP FROM MY CONVERSATION WITH "GILES" IN PORT OAKS, BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE THIS IS GOING TO TAKE PLACE IN EVERY BLACK MARKET LOCATION AND WENTWORTH'S.

THE REAL BLACK MARKET SYSTEM OPERATES HALF IN CYBERSPACE AND HALF IN OLD SCHOOL SALES.

WE WON'T SHUT DOWN EITHER, BUT WE WILL DO JUST ENOUGH TO GET THEIR ATTENTION.

KATIE, THERE IS A MARKET TRUCK NEXT TO THE ARENA...

FIND THE MARKET BOSS... HE'LL BE STANDING AWAY FROM THE TRUCK. BE HIS NEW BEST FRIEND.

DRESSED LIKE THIS, NOT GOING TO BE A PROBLEM.

THE NEXT TWO STEPS WILL BE TRICKY...

FIRST, WE HAVE TO TAP INTO THE CONNECTION SERVER BETWEEN THE MARKET AND WENTWORTH'S.

MAY, AM I RIGHT IN GUESSING YOU'RE THE ONE BORROWING MISTY MYSEY'S ARACHNOS UNIFORM?

RIGHT... THAT AND HER DNA TOO... JUST DON'T ASK HOW I DID THAT.\*

THAT'S OKAY. THAT'LL ACTUALLY WORK FOR US. YOU'RE GOING TO GET ACCESS TO THE SERVERS. I'LL SEND YOU A MAP TO THEIR LOCATION.

THAT JUST LEAVES... JASON? WHY ARE YOU COMING BACK FROM CAP AU DIABLE?

LAST-MINUTE CHANGE AT FACEMAKERS...

OMEGA SHIFT / MISTY MYSEY

(\*SEE ISSUE #16)

JASON, YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED MAKE CHANGES TO YOUR IDENTITY'S APPEARANCE!

I'M SUPPOSED TO PRETEND TO BE ON THE LEVEL OF STATESMAN FROM THE 1930'S.

THAT IS NOT GOING TO HAPPEN WITHOUT AN EXO-SKELETON AND SOME LIGHT ARMOR.

IF YOU WANTED ACCURACY YOU SHOULD HAVE RECRUITED ICON POWERS INSTEAD.

FINE, I'LL FIND A WAY TO DEAL WITH IT LATER.

GO TO THE NORTH END OF THE ISLAND BY THE OLD MONKEY CLUB...

MIDKNIGHT X / TYRANNUS 4

VILLA MONTROSE

"YOU GET TO PAY THE VISIT TO THE HOME OF THE MARGONE FAMILY."

IT'S LIKE A SMALL FORTRESS...

NOW I KNOW WHY I WAS PICKED INSTEAD OF ICON POWERS...

KENT HAS THE POWER TO GET IN...

BUT NOT THE TEMPERAMENT TO DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE...

THESE ARE THE PEOPLE THAT TERRORIZE KINGS ROW. THEY THINK THEY OWN MY CITY LIKE THEY OWN PORT OAKS.

NOW I GET TO GIVE THEM A LITTLE PAYBACK.

AND THEY WOULD NEVER KNOW IT WAS REALLY ME.

LIBRA ORDER HEADQUARTERS

**TAINED EYE!**

GET YOUR BONY FALLEN ANGEL A\$\$ OUT HERE!

I WANT **ANSWERS!**

I'M GETTING POT-SHOTS FROM EVERY PLAYER IN THE ISLES!

EVERYWHERE I GO PEOPLE ARE SAYING THAT I'M GALATEA POWERS JUST BECAUSE I HAVE THE SAME HAIR STYLE, WHICH WAS GIVEN TO ME BY SOME TART IN POCKET D!

AND IT WAS FROM A FREE MAKEOVER TOKEN THAT **YOU GAVE ME!**

SO LET'S GO, BIRD-GIRL!  
I'M TIRED OF THE GAMES!

I'M TIRED OF BEING PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER ONE FOR NO APPARENT REASON!

I CAN'T EVEN HEAR FROM MISTRESS LIBRA, THE SO-CALLED "MISTRESS" OF OUR BENEFACTOR, AND YOU NORMALLY CAN'T EVEN PAY TO SHUT THAT TRAMP UP!



WHERE IS EVERYBODY?



THIS IS WHY I DON'T LIKE THIS BASE... EVERYTHING IS MAGIC AND ALCHEMY.

THERE'S ALMOST NO TECH AT ALL!

I'M SURPRISED THEY EVEN ALLOWED THIS USELESS COMPUTER IN HERE!



HUH?  
WHAT WAS THAT?



I COULD SWEAR I HEARD SOMETHING FROM...  
THE FIREPIT?

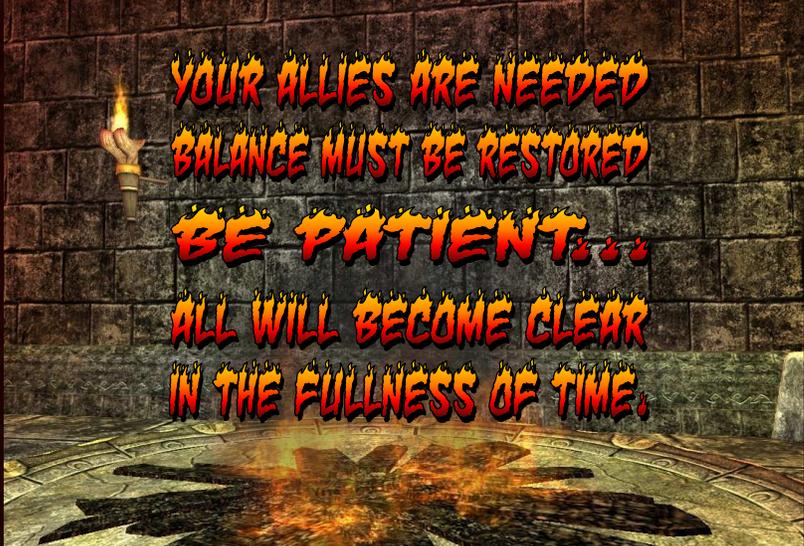


**ULTRAALADY...  
THIS IS THE VOICE...  
OF LIBRA...**



OH GREAT...

FALLEN ANGELS, PRETENDERS, AND NOW I'M GETTING MESSAGES FROM A GLORIFIED BARBEQUE PIT!



**YOUR ALLIES ARE NEEDED  
BALANCE MUST BE RESTORED  
BE PATIENT...  
ALL WILL BECOME CLEAR  
IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME.**



I WONDER WHAT THE HECK THAT IS SUPPOSED TO MEAN...

AND I WONDER WHAT WE'LL GET OUT OF IT ALL BESIDES SOME MORE NEEDLESS FIGHTS?

MARCONEVILLE

ACCORDING TO JOHN COLE, THIS IS WHERE THE BLACK MARKET NETWORK IS LOCATED.

I'M HERE TO CHECK THE SERVERS...

HELLO?

EMPTY..  
STRANGE.

NO OFFICE RECEPTIONIST.

IN THE MIDDLE OF A BUSINESS DAY TOO!

OH WELL... GOING DOWN.

HMM... NOT YOUR ORDINARY BASEMENT.

CIRCUIT BREAKERS, LOCKERS, WEAPONS...

AND THESE AREN'T ARACHNOS WEAPONS!

WHAT THE...? THOSE AREN'T ARACHNOS TROOPERS!

LOOKS LIKE JOHN COLE WAS RIGHT ABOUT A SEPARATE INFRASTRUCTURE RUNNING THE ISLES.

EXCUSE ME BOYS... I'M WITH THE ARACHNOS APPRECIATION SOCIETY. I'M HERE TO CHECK YOUR GUN PERMITS.

INTRUDER!

\*BLAM!\*  
\*BLAM!\*

\*Budda!\*

\*Budda!\*

\*Budda!\*

\*Budda!\*



ERRAAARGH!

\*Budda!  
\*Budda!  
\*Budda!  
\*Budda!



\*Unnhh...\*

\*Fwap!\*



AND THAT'S THE LAST ONE...

THE ARMOR IS PRETTY TOUGH.

FORTUNATELY THE LOCKERS SHOULD HOLD THEM FOR A WHILE.



IT'S LIKE A MERGE BETWEEN NEW AND OLD HARDWARE.

FORTUNATELY I HAVE THE MEMORIES OF A FEW TECHS TO MAKE MY WAY THROUGH ALL OF THIS.



THIS IS MAY. I HAVE ACCESS TO THE BLACK MARKET SERVERS.

GOOD JOB. STAND BY FOR THE NEXT PHASE.

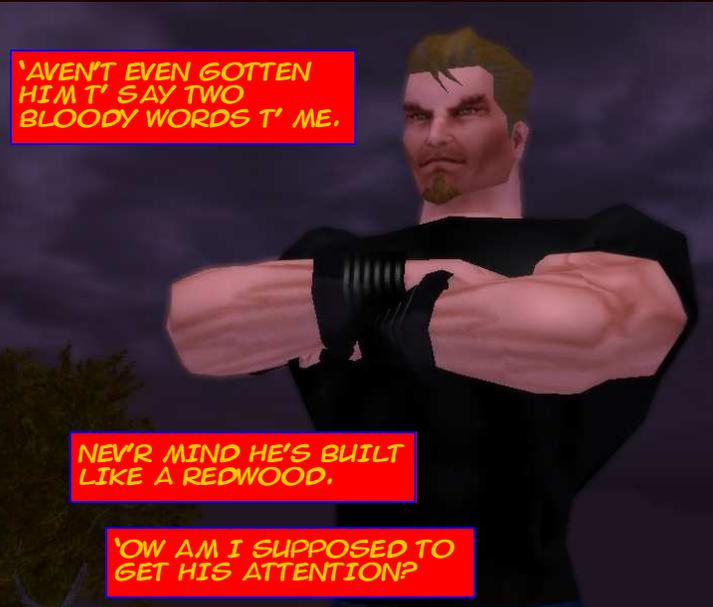


ARENA AREA

BLACK MARKET

SO... THIS IS HOW YOU SPEND YOUR TIME? JUST STANDING AROUND?

FAT LOT THIS IS...



'AVEN'T EVEN GOTTEN HIM T' SAY TWO BLOODY WORDS T' ME.

NEV'R MIND HE'S BUILT LIKE A REDWOOD.

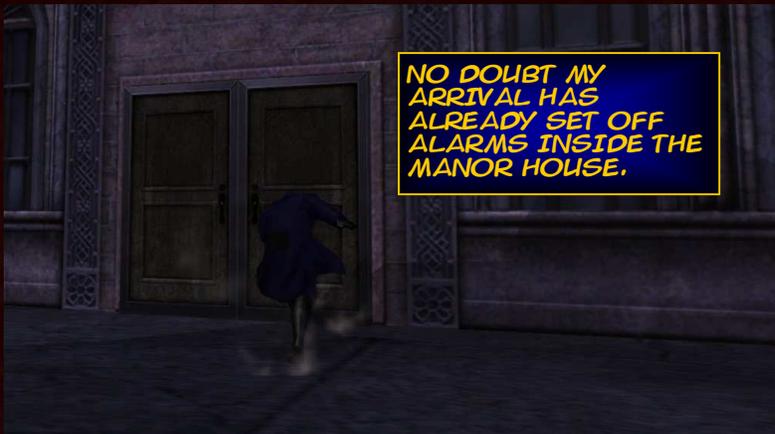
'OW AM I SUPPOSED TO GET HIS ATTENTION?

MARCONE ESTATE



YOU THERE!  
HOLD IT!

ALL OF THE  
FIREPOWER TO REPEL  
ARACHNOS... AND YET  
THEIR WEAKNESS WAS  
AT THE FRONT GATE.



NO DOUBT MY  
ARRIVAL HAS  
ALREADY SET OFF  
ALARMS INSIDE THE  
MANOR HOUSE.



GET 'IM!  
NAIL THAT  
PUNK'S A\$\$

\*BRATTT\*  
\*BRATTT\*  
\*BRATTT\*  
\*BRATTT\*

WHAT LITTLE GOOD  
THAT WILL DO THEM.



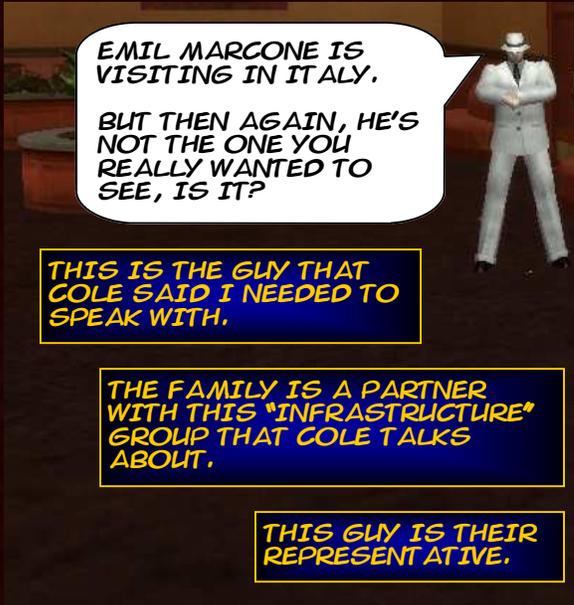
\*KaPOW!\*



\*BAM!\*



\*KaTHUNK!\*



EMIL MARCONE IS  
VISITING IN ITALY.  
BUT THEN AGAIN, HE'S  
NOT THE ONE YOU  
REALLY WANTED TO  
SEE, IS IT?

THIS IS THE GUY THAT  
COLE SAID I NEEDED TO  
SPEAK WITH.

THE FAMILY IS A PARTNER  
WITH THIS "INFRASTRUCTURE"  
GROUP THAT COLE TALKS  
ABOUT.

THIS GUY IS THEIR  
REPRESENT ATIVE.

NO... HE'S NOT, FOR NOW.  
YOU'RE GOING TO GET  
WORD TO YOUR "FRIENDS".  
YOU KNOW WHICH ONES I'M  
TALKING ABOUT.  
YOU'RE GOING TO TELL  
THEM THAT LOT 316 IS OFF  
THE MARKET.

I SEE...

AND YOU THINK THAT BY COMING HERE YOU CAN MAKE THAT HAPPEN, DO YOU?

THE FAMILY WILL HAVE A PRICE ON YOUR HEAD SO LARGE EVEN LORD RECLUSE WILL WANT IN ON IT.

OH I'M NOT DOING THIS BY MYSELF, AND YOU KNOW IT.

YOU WILL TELL YOUR "FRIENDS" THAT THE LIBRA ORDER WILL BE ACQUIRING LOT 316 AND THAT WE WILL BE WORKING OUT THE COST IN A LATER MEETING.

YOU THINK YOU HAVE IT ALL WORKED OUT, DON'T YOU?

A SHOW OF FORCE, A LITTLE MESSAGE TO THE RIGHT PERSON, AND WE'LL CATER TO YOUR DEMAND.

ARE YOU REALLY THAT NAIVE?

THIS IS ABOUT BUSINESS. THE WHOLE INFRASTRUCTURE REVOLVES AROUND KEEPING THE WHEELS TURNING, NO MATTER WHO PRETENDS TO BE IN CHARGE.

WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE REPRESENTING ANYWAY?

JOHN COLE.

\*KaPOW!\*

WHOEVER JOHN COLE REALLY IS ANYWAY...

WAIT...

IT'S NOT PUBLICLY KNOWN THAT STATESMAN'S REAL NAME IS MARCUS COLE.

HE HAS AT LEAST ONE DIRECT DECEDENT, MISS LIBERTY. BUT WHAT IF THERE WAS ANOTHER?

WE DON'T KNOW TOO MUCH ABOUT JOHN COLE HIMSELF, OTHER THAN WHAT LITTLE JESSICA DANVERS, AKA CRYSTAL BURKE, TOLD US BEFORE SENDING US HERE.

AND HE KNOWS JUST ENOUGH OF THE ISLES TO BE DANGEROUS HERE.

WHAT IF HE'S IN THIS FOR MORE THAN JUST DOING A "FAVOR" FOR HIS CHILDHOOD FRIEND?



THE MESSAGE HAS BEEN DELIVERED, BUT I DON'T THINK THEY BUY IT.

THAT'S OKAY, JASON. THEY'LL GET THE POINT SOON ENOUGH.

MAY, HOW GOES FINDING OUT THE LOCATION OF THE PHYSICAL ITEM?

THAT'S PROVING TO BE A PROBLEM. WE KNOW THERE'S A LOT NUMBER TO THE ITEM...



BUT THE INVENTORY SYSTEM SOMEHOW DOESN'T LIST WHERE THE PHYSICAL ITEM IS! IT'S ALMOST AS THOUGH... AS THOUGH THERE'S NO ACTUAL ITEM!



BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE! YOU DON'T SCAM THE BLACK MARKET! PERIOD! "THEY" JUST DON'T ALLOW THAT SORT OF GAME TO BE PLAYED!



ISEA...



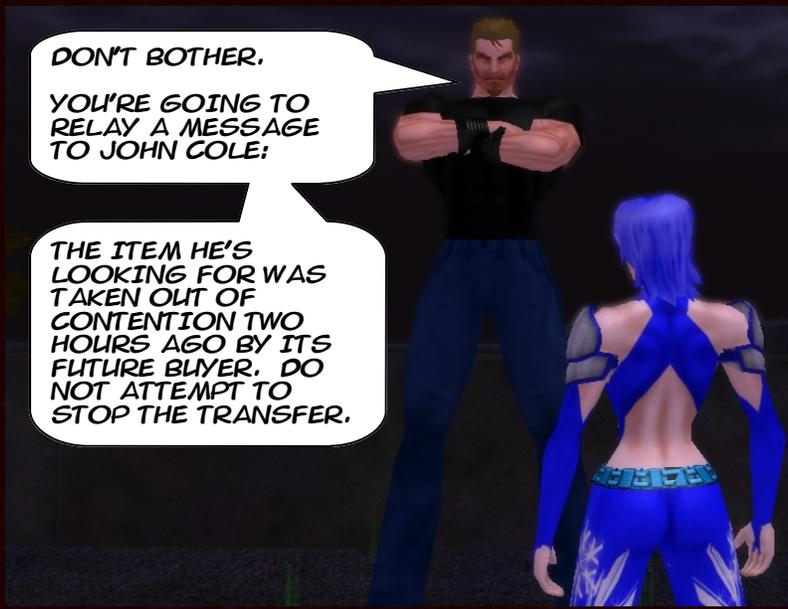
I KNOW THAT YOU'RE NOT REALLY WHO YOU PRETEND TO BE. THE REAL ISEA IS AS COLD AS HER POWERS. YOU THINK YOU'RE HERE TO GET INSIDE INFORMATION...

OUCH! BUSTED!



BUT I KNOW THE REAL REASON WHY YOU'RE HERE... YOU'RE HERE TO SERVE AS A CONTACT BETWEEN YOUR BOSS AND MINE.

UM... CAN I AT LEAST...



DON'T BOTHER. YOU'RE GOING TO RELAY A MESSAGE TO JOHN COLE:

THE ITEM HE'S LOOKING FOR WAS TAKEN OUT OF CONTENTION TWO HOURS AGO BY ITS FUTURE BUYER. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO STOP THE TRANSFER.



**CONTROL, THIS IS BRICK JOHNSON.**  
**INFORM LORD RECLUSE THAT WIDOWMAKER IS ASKING ABOUT THE PACKAGE.**

**BRICK JOHNSON**



**D@MN IT! I WAS AFRAID OF THIS!**

**OKAY PLAYERS, NEW GAME.**  
**MAY, HAVE YOU FIGURED OUT WHERE THE SERVERS CONNECT TO WENTWORTH'S?**



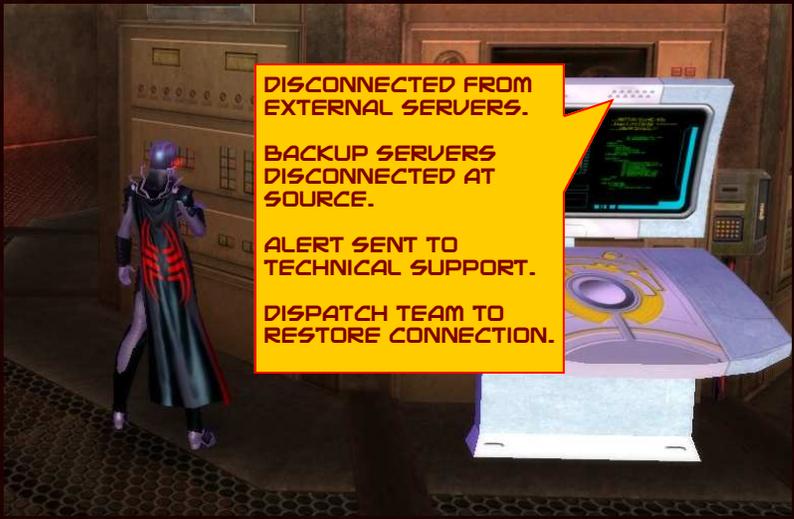
**U.M... YEAH?**

**GOOD, START SHUTTING THEM DOWN ONE AT A TIME.**

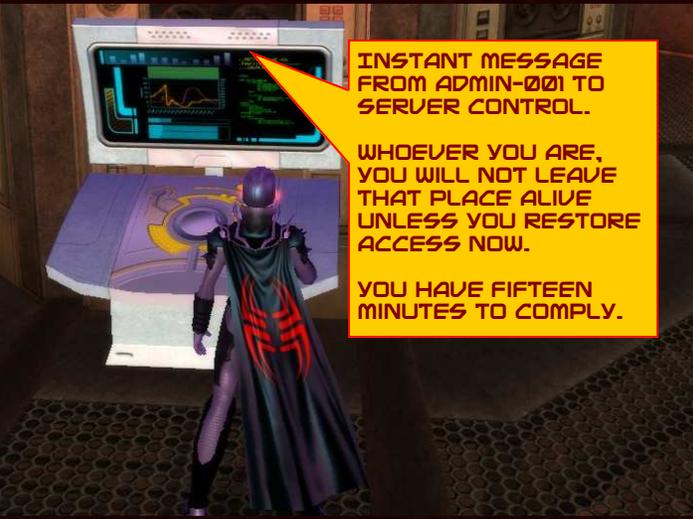


**WELL, HERE GOES NOTHING...**

**WARNING! SERVER DISCONNECT!**  
**WARNING! SERVER DISCONNECT!**



**DISCONNECTED FROM EXTERNAL SERVERS.**  
**BACKUP SERVERS DISCONNECTED AT SOURCE.**  
**ALERT SENT TO TECHNICAL SUPPORT.**  
**DISPATCH TEAM TO RESTORE CONNECTION.**



**INSTANT MESSAGE FROM ADMIN-001 TO SERVER CONTROL.**  
**WHOEVER YOU ARE, YOU WILL NOT LEAVE THAT PLACE ALIVE UNLESS YOU RESTORE ACCESS NOW.**  
**YOU HAVE FIFTEEN MINUTES TO COMPLY.**



**OH BOY... UH JOHN? DID YOU CATCH THAT?**

**I HEARD.**  
**STAY PUT AND HOLD THE FORT.**  
**I'M GOING TO MAKE A CALL.**



**MIDNIGHT SQUAD RELAY CENTER.**  
**WELCOME BACK JOHN COLE.**

**FLASH MESSAGE TO OPERATIVE DESIGNATED "PROPHECY CHILD", MESSAGE IS AS FOLLOWS:**  
**FINLAND 1976.**



SORRY LUSCA...  
I CAN'T PLAY WITH YOU TONIGHT...



I'VE GOT A SUBMARINE TO CATCH.



HELLO JANUS. I'M TAKING THE RED-EYE TO THE ISLES.



GALATEA POWERS...  
DON'T GET ME WRONG, I'M HONORED TO FINALLY SEE YOU IN PERSON... BUT I'M REALLY NOT THE PERSON YOU WANT TO BE SEEN AROUND, MUCH LESS GET A RIDE TO THE ROGUE ISLES.

THIS ISN'T SOME TRAVEL SERVICE THAT YOU CAN TAKE TO GO TO THE BAHAMAS ON A WHIM.  
THE PEOPLE WHO USE MY SERVICE ARE OFTEN RUNNING FROM THE LAW.  
I'M SURE THERE ARE OTHER METHODS YOU CAN EMPLOY TO GET TO WHERE YOU NEED TO BE. USE THOSE.

 SUBMARINER JANUS



YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE THAT CAN DO IT QUICKLY WITHOUT SETTING OFF ALARMS OR VIOLATING TREATIES.  
SO YOU CAN EITHER TAKE ME TO THE ROGUE ISLES... OR I'LL FEED YOUR SUB TO LUSCA.



NN... WELCOME ABOARD.

**\*BEEP-BEEP!\***

**SPEAK.**

**HELLO MISTER COLE.**

**I BELIEVE YOU'VE BEEN EXPECTING OUR CALL.**

**AND YOU ARE... ?**

**FOR THE TIME BEING YOU CAN CALL ME SMITH.**

**YOU'VE BEEN TRYING TO GET OUR ATTENTION.**

**BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR.**

**WHAT I WISH FOR IS A FACE-TO-FACE TO DISCUSS ACQUIRING LOT 316, BUT YOU SUPPOSEDLY TOOK IT OFF THE MARKET.**

**THAT IS OUR RIGHT. ARACHNOS MADE A GENEROUS OFFER FOR THE CONTENTS. WE AGREED.**

**I'LL MAKE A COUNTER-OFFER. WHATEVER RECLUSE BID PLUS TEN PERCENT.**

**AND IF THE OFFER WAS FOR TEN MILLION DOLLARS?**

**THEN I'LL OFFER TEN-POINT-TEN MILLION, PROVIDED THE CONTENTS ARE WHAT ARE ADVERTISED.**

**YOU ARE ANNOYINGLY PERSISTENT, MISTER COLE.**

**VERY WELL. WE WILL MEET IN ONE HOUR IN GRANDVILLE.**

**ALL ACTIONS WILL CEASE UNTIL AFTER WE MEET. AGREED?**

**AGREED.**

**ALL PLAYERS LISTEN UP.**

**I'M MEETING WITH THE INFRASTRUCTURE.**

**IF YOU DON'T HEAR FROM ME IN NINETY MINUTES, GET TO YOUR RENDEZVOUS POINTS AND EVACUATE.**

**HMMPH... EASY FOR HIM TO SAY.**

**HE DOESN'T HAVE AN ARMY WATCHING THE ONLY EXIT.**

**NOT FOR LONG. I'LL BE THERE IN FIFTEEN.**

**ONE WAY OR ANOTHER I'LL GET YOU OUT OF THERE.**

GRANDVILLE

I HATE COMING HERE...

THE WHOLE PLACE SMELLS OF DEATH.

WIDOWMAKER...

ARACHNOS GREETING SQUAD...

THIS IS LORD RECLUSE'S HOME GROUND.

THIS IS NO PLACE FOR A TURNCOAT LIKE YOU.

NO DOUBT RECLUSE SENT THEM TO STOP ME FROM MEETING WITH SMITH.

THE NAME IS JOHN COLE.

I HAVE BUSINESS WITH RECLUSE, NOT WITH HIS STOOGES.

BUT IF YOU WANT TO KNOW HOW I BECAME THE WIDOWMAKER...

\*SSSS...\*

\*SNIKT!\*

\*whirl-SLASH!\*

\*unnh...\*

\*unnh...\*

\*unnh...\*

\*unnh...\*

I DON'T HAVE TIME TO PLAY WHACK-A-SPIDER WITH THESE GLYS...

IT'S TIME TO STOP USING THE POWERS OF A FORMER ARACHNOS WIDOW...

AND START USING THE POWERS THAT I WAS BORN WITH IN THE FIRST PLACE.

THE POWERS THAT COME NATURALLY WHEN YOU'RE A MEMBER OF STATESMAN'S FAMILY!





**\* BOOM! \***

OOH.. THAT KIND OF TINGLED MY NOSE.

WHAT I'M OFFERING IS THIS:

MY ORIGINAL OFFER OF TEN-POINT-TEN MILLION STANDS, AND I'LL USE THE DEAL TO CONVINCE HER TO END THE ASSAULT AND GO HOME.

YOU MUST THINK US TO BE IDIOTS, COLE.

NO, HE'S PLAYING RATHER SMARTLY.

I REMEMBER THE M-A-D POLICY, MISTER COLE. MY FAMILY CAME HERE FROM FINLAND AFTER THE BOMB.

I'M PRESUMING THE DATA ON THAT DRIVE WOULD EXPLAIN WHY I SHOULD FEAR THIS KIND OF ESCALATION.

THIS IS ALREADY PROVING TO BE A LOSING DEAL FOR US, GENTLEMEN.

UH-OH... IT'S STARTING TO CRACK UP ALREADY.

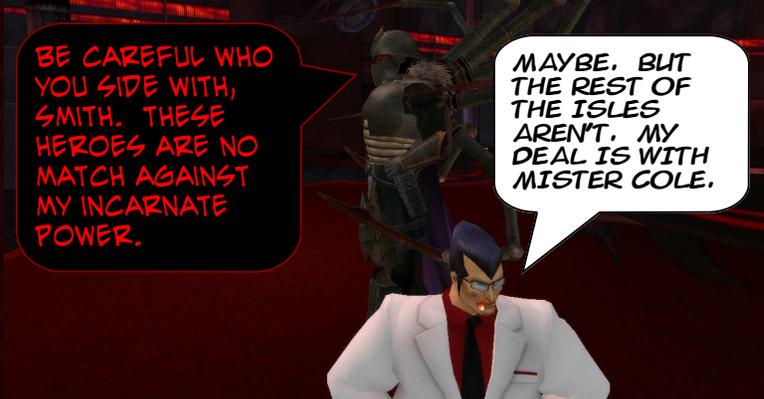
HOPE THE PILOTS ARE READY TO BAIL OUT.

RECLUSE, WHILE I AM TEMPTED TO ACCEPT YOUR OFFER OF ONE HUNDRED MILLION, I AM HESITANT TO AGREE TO THE OFFER IF THE CONSEQUENCES INVOLVE A POTENTIAL ALL-OUT WAR WITH THE HEROES THAT COULD DESTROY EVERYTHING.

**\* Ka-BOOOOM!!!! \***

SCRATCH ONE FLYER.

WHAT'S NEXT? THE JADE SPIDER? BLACK SCORPION? OR DOES LORD RECLUSE THINK I'VE FINALLY MADE IT TO THE A-LIST YET?



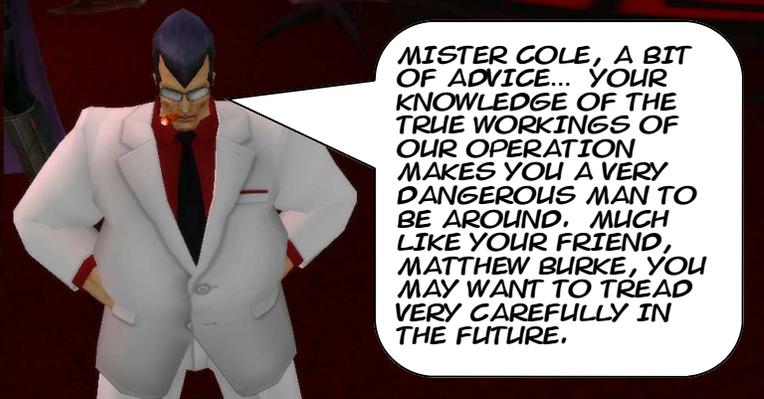
BE CAREFUL WHO YOU SIDE WITH, SMITH. THESE HEROES ARE NO MATCH AGAINST MY INCARNATE POWER.

MAYBE, BUT THE REST OF THE ISLES AREN'T. MY DEAL IS WITH MISTER COLE.



Flash Message to Galatea Powers from Midnight Squad: Deal has been made. Return to Janus.

TOO BAD, BETTER LUCK NEXT TIME, RECLUSE.

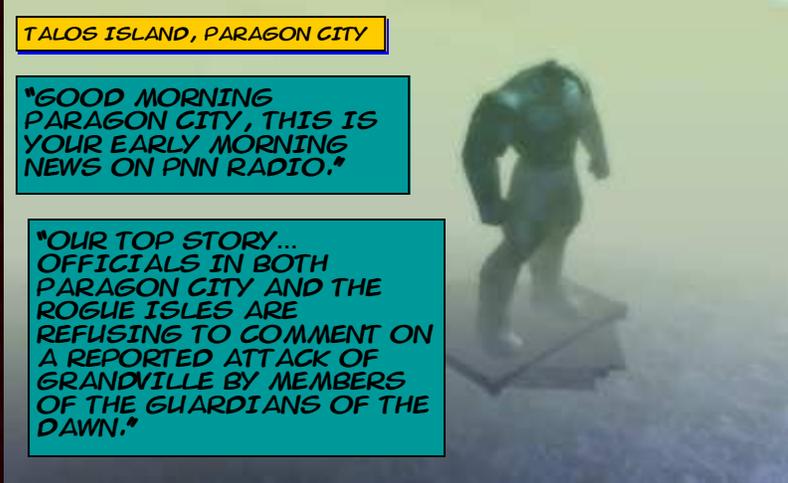


MISTER COLE, A BIT OF ADVICE... YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUE WORKINGS OF OUR OPERATION MAKES YOU A VERY DANGEROUS MAN TO BE AROUND. MUCH LIKE YOUR FRIEND, MATTHEW BURKE, YOU MAY WANT TO TREAD VERY CAREFULLY IN THE FUTURE.



AGREED.

FAIR ENOUGH. I'LL MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE TRANSFER. PLEASURE DOING BUSINESS WITH YOU.



TALOS ISLAND, PARAGON CITY

"GOOD MORNING PARAGON CITY, THIS IS YOUR EARLY MORNING NEWS ON PNN RADIO."

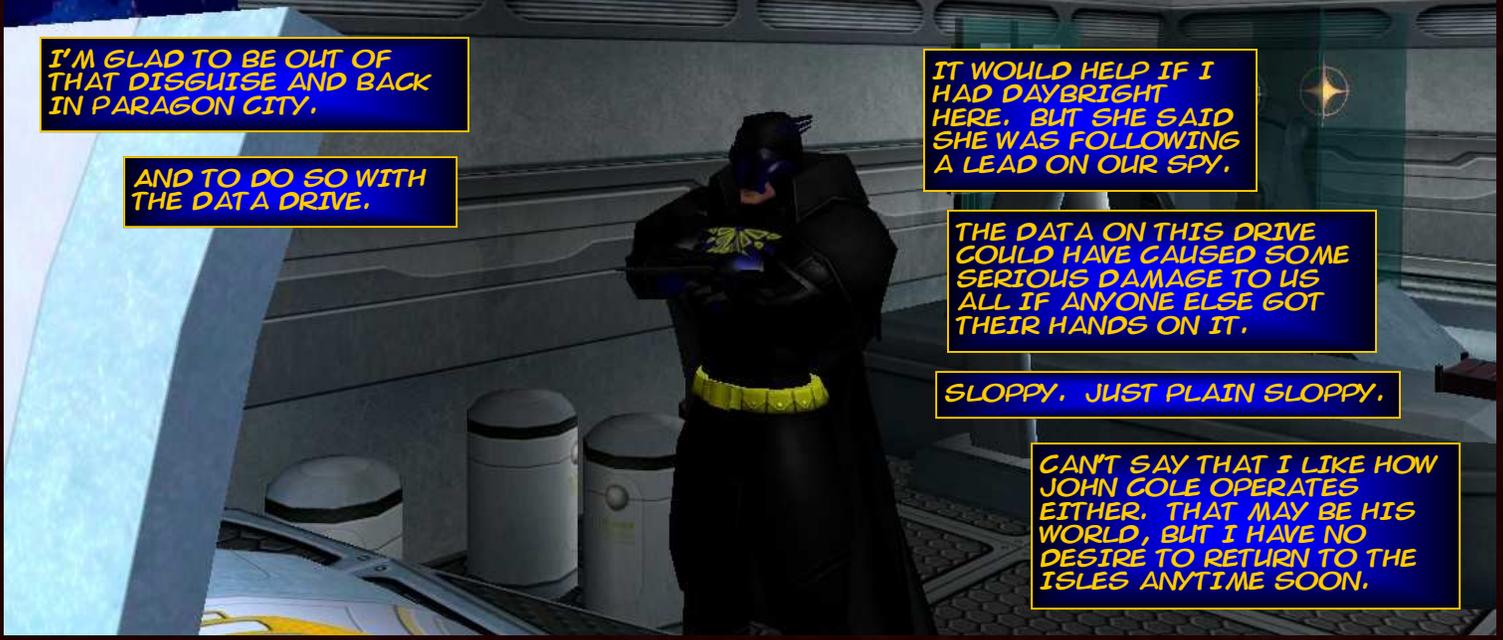
"OUR TOP STORY... OFFICIALS IN BOTH PARAGON CITY AND THE ROGUE ISLES ARE REFUSING TO COMMENT ON A REPORTED ATTACK OF GRANDVILLE BY MEMBERS OF THE GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN."



GUARDIANS BASE

BRRR!!! NEV'R DOIN' THAT AGAIN! I NEED HOT COFFEE AN' A HOT SAUNA.

"DESPITE REPORTS OF AIR RAID SIRENS GOING OFF, ROGUE ISLES OFFICIALS REFER TO THE MATTER AS, QUOTE, 'A SIMPLE MISUNDERSTANDING'."



I'M GLAD TO BE OUT OF THAT DISGUISE AND BACK IN PARAGON CITY.

AND TO DO SO WITH THE DATA DRIVE.

IT WOULD HELP IF I HAD DAYBRIGHT HERE, BUT SHE SAID SHE WAS FOLLOWING A LEAD ON OUR SPY.

THE DATA ON THIS DRIVE COULD HAVE CAUSED SOME SERIOUS DAMAGE TO US ALL IF ANYONE ELSE GOT THEIR HANDS ON IT.

SLOPPY. JUST PLAIN SLOPPY.

CAN'T SAY THAT I LIKE HOW JOHN COLE OPERATES EITHER. THAT MAY BE HIS WORLD, BUT I HAVE NO DESIRE TO RETURN TO THE ISLES ANYTIME SOON.

HAHAHA!!!  
THEY DIDN'T!

YUP... RIGHT  
THEN AND  
THERE. ALL  
THREE OF  
THEM. HATE  
TO SEE THEIR  
CLEANING  
BILL.

I WISH YOU  
DIDN'T HAVE  
TO GO BACK.

I DON'T HAVE  
TOO MANY  
FRIENDS LEFT  
FROM HOME,  
AND I  
OBVIOUSLY  
CAN'T GO  
THERE TO  
VISIT.

HOME... WHEN I WENT BACK TO  
MERCY TO SEE YOUR BROTHER,  
THERE WAS A PART OF ME THAT  
STILL WANTED TO TRY TO FIND  
MY OLD HOME... EVEN THOUGH I  
KNEW IT WAS DESTROYED  
ALONG WITH YOUR OLD HOME  
AND YOUR MOM IN THE RIKTI  
INVASION OF '02.

TRUST ME CRYSTAL... I MEAN,  
JESSICA... THERE'S NOTHING  
LEFT OF "HOME", ASIDE FROM  
YOUR BROTHER BEING THERE.

IN MANY WAYS, I'M JEALOUS  
OF YOU. YOU'RE HERE... WITH A  
GOOD CREW OF PEOPLE. DON'T  
CARE TOO MUCH FOR  
MIDNIGHT X, BUT THE OTHERS  
SEEM DECENT ENOUGH.

PLUS YOU'RE NOT ALWAYS  
LOOKING OVER YOUR  
SHOULDER, WONDERING WHO'S  
TRYING TO KILL YOU AND  
HOPING THEY DON'T KNOW THE  
TRUTH ABOUT YOU. YOU REALLY  
HAVE IT MADE HERE.

WELL, I HAVE TO  
GET GOING... I  
WOULD SAY THAT  
SHELLY WOULD  
BE WORRIED,  
BUT SHE'S  
REALLY NOT THE  
WORRYING KIND.

WELL YOU HAVE  
AN HONORARY  
MEMBERSHIP  
WITH US, SO  
ANY TIME YOU  
NEED SOME TIME  
AWAY FROM THE  
ISLES... JUST  
LET US KNOW.

U'M... ARE YOU  
GOING TO SEE  
HIM BEFORE YOU  
LEAVE?

STATESMAN? NO.  
WE... SORT OF HAVE  
AN UNDERSTANDING  
BETWEEN US.

I DIDN'T KNOW HE  
WAS MY FATHER  
UNTIL JUST A FEW  
YEARS AGO. HE  
DIDN'T EVEN KNOW  
MY MOTHER WAS  
PREGNANT, NEVER  
MIND AN  
ARACHNOS SPY.

IT'S JUST ONE  
MORE SECRET  
THAT I HAVE TO  
KEEP FROM LORD  
RECLUSE.

SHE'S CHANGED...  
AND MORE THAN  
JUST HER NAME.

IT'S A NICE PLACE TO  
VISIT, BUT I STILL HAVE  
SOMEONE TO GO BACK TO...  
AND A BIKINI TO SEE.

**OUROBOROS - NEAR THE END OF TIME**



WHAT TH'...?  
HOW DID I  
GET HERE?

I KNOW I DIDN'T  
TRIGGER THE  
OUROBOROS  
PORTAL!



WELL, THAT'S STILL  
AN EASY FIX... I'LL  
JUST TRIGGER MY  
BASE TELEPORTER  
AND BEAM BACK TO  
THE PRESENT...

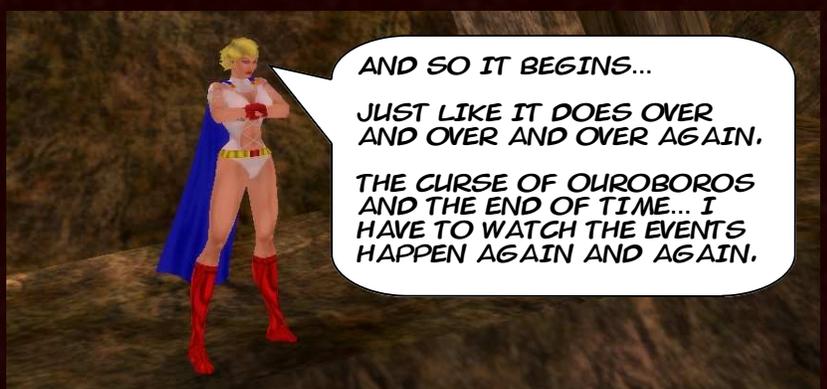
HUH? IT'S NOT  
WORKING.



THE POCKET D PASS...  
THE WENTWORTH  
MARKET TELEPORTER...

EVEN MY GUARDIAN  
COMMUNICATION  
LINK... THEY'RE ALL  
OFF-LINE!

WHAT THE HECK IS  
GOING ON HERE?



AND SO IT BEGINS...

JUST LIKE IT DOES OVER  
AND OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

THE CURSE OF OUROBOROS  
AND THE END OF TIME... I  
HAVE TO WATCH THE EVENTS  
HAPPEN AGAIN AND AGAIN.

**STEEL CANYON**



LOOK, MAY, I  
APPRECIATE YOU  
WANTING TO BE A  
LITTLE DIFFERENT, BUT  
PRETENDING TO BE MY  
SISTER ISN'T THE WAY.

BESIDES, I DON'T  
EVEN HAVE A  
YOUNGER SISTER.  
I WAS AN ONLY  
CHILD.

STEVIE, YOU  
DON'T GET IT.  
FOR ALL INTENTS  
AND PURPOSES, I  
AM YOUR SISTER  
IN THIS FORM,  
RIGHT DOWN TO  
THE TWEAKED DNA.

AND YOU DO HAVE A KID  
SISTER... OR AT LEAST  
YOUR WITNESS  
PROTECTION FILE SAYS  
YOU DO.\* I JUST BASED  
HER ON YOUR DNA ON  
FILE AND PUT ON A WIG.

KARA DESIGNED A  
GREAT NEW OUTFIT FOR  
YOU, I'VE ALREADY SET  
UP "MELISSA WALKER"  
WITH HER OWN HERO ID,  
AND SINCE THE GREY  
BIOMED BOOSTERS HAVE  
BEEN PURGED FROM  
YOUR SYSTEM, YOU'RE  
LEGALLY FREE FROM THE  
POLICE RESTRICTIONS.  
STEVIE, I'M GIVING YOU  
A WAY BACK INTO BEING  
A HERO AGAIN!

**STEVIE WALKER-RODGERS (CAPTAIN PARAGONNA)**

(\* WHICH SHE ACCESSED IN ISSUE #16)

NEXT MORNING - ATLAS PARK



A CURIOUS CHOICE OF MEETING LOCATIONS. PUBLIC, YET WITH ACCESS TO THE GUARDIAN BASE IF NECESSARY.

STARCYNUS

I FIGURED IT ALL OUT, STARCYNUS. I KNOW IT WAS YOU THAT HACKED INTO OUR SERVERS.

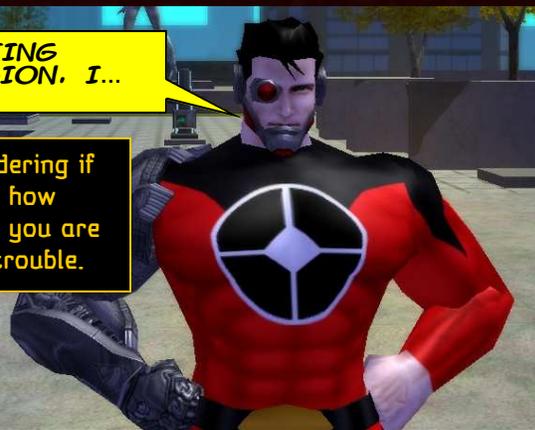
YOU WERE THE ONE THAT GAVE AWAY OUR SECRETS. YOU WERE THE ONE THAT HAS BEEN FEEDING INTEL TO OUTSIDE SOURCES. YOU'RE THE SPY.



DAYBRIGHT

INTERESTING CONCLUSION. I...

I was wondering if you realize how many ways you are in serious trouble.



WHAT?

You're standing next to a dimensional portal. You have a Pocket D teleporter, a Guardian medical teleporter, and even a Wentworth Market teleporter. Did you ever wonder what would happen if they all were activated at the same time?



N-NO!

Like this?

\*BEEP!\*  
\*PNG!\*

\*PING!\*  
\*BEEP!\*



AAAAAAGH!!



Goodbye, Kheldian.

WHAT.. WHAT DID YOU DO?

What needed to be done, Hank Geddy. What you should have done in the first place.

Now we...  
Now \*I\* can begin.

FAR FROM OVER!



## **Paragon City History - The Cold War Era**

One of the prevailing doctrines in the Cold War was that of “Mutual Assured Destruction”, or simply by its initials “M.A.D.”. It was the belief that, if provoked, both the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics would be willing to engage in all-out nuclear war even though doing so would destroy both sides as well as the rest of the world. Knowing that they would not survive such a conflict, both sides would do everything in their power to make sure such an exchange would not happen unless absolutely necessary.

It was a fear-based policy that could have worked if not for the proliferation of another weapon at that time: super-powered beings.

Although super-powered beings were primarily seen as heroes in the eyes of the public, governments, including those of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., saw them as tools to exploit at every opportunity.

As Statesman and the Freedom Phalanx worked to keep the streets of Paragon City safe, the U.S. Government began a quiet program to recruit, develop, and train its own group of super-human beings. Using the new “Might for Right” act, the government drafted anyone with abilities they could use. Likewise the Soviet Politburo authorized a series of aggressive recruitment programs to have a powers proliferation similar to their own nuclear proliferations, resulting in the Soviet Defenders of the Motherland, an offshoot of the original Valiant Defenders of the Motherland supergroup.

The end result of these competing mutual proliferations was an even far more aggressive foreign policy and more and more instances of nuclear brinksmanship.

In 1963, when the U.S. initiated a blockade of Cuba, President Kennedy summoned Statesman and the Freedom Phalanx to the White House and specifically ordered that they stay away from the area for fear that their presence would escalate the conflict. The president did not realize at that time, though, that the Pentagon had already dispatched their own super-powered operatives to dismantle the Soviet missiles already in Cuba.

Although not made public until 2000, there were several skirmishes between NATO and Soviet Block super-powered forces during the administrations of Presidents Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, most notably in Southeast Asia, although additional skirmishes were seen in Latin America and the Middle East.

Both super-powered and nuclear brinksmanship came to a climax in 1976, when a low-orbiting U.S. Air Force spy plane was taken down by super-powered Soviet forces. Onboard the plane was a telepathic code-breaker named Captain Gerald Mynor. As the plane crashed in Soviet territory, the Air Force asked Statesman to mount a rescue. Using Freedom Phalanx technology, he teleported into the USSR to rescue Mynor and the rest of the crew and fly them all to safety.

This resulted in the launching of a tactical nuclear device against Statesman, which detonated over Finland, incinerating the rescued crew as well as three thousand people nearby, and

*Continues on next page...*

seriously injuring Statesman.

As a result of this escalation, both NATO and Soviet Bloc forces were at Defense Condition One, with medium and long-range nuclear missiles readied, including the activation of orbital missile platforms, which were in violation of a 1968 arms treaty.

With minutes before launch, the superheroes of the Freedom Phalanx, Dawn Patrol, two dozen other foreign-based hero groups, and even the original members of the Valiant Defenders of the Motherland, carried out an aggressive operation to dismantle all active nuclear missiles in Europe and in low-orbit.

The sudden act of so many hero groups dismantling the nuclear missiles, along with the realization that Statesman was still alive, forced an immediate halt to future escalations. British superhero and Dawn Patrol Leader Hero One stepped forward to negotiate a new treaty that would stop future games of nuclear brinkmanship and give a clear message to the other nations of the world that the super-powered community would no longer tolerate future threats to the planet.

In addressing the United Nations General Assembly, Hero One gave the following warning:

*“For thirty years, the leaders of the United States and Soviet Union have referred to themselves as ‘global superpowers’. They have carried themselves as being the ultimate forces on the planet, holding the fate of the world in their hands. This recent incident should serve as a clear message to those leaders... that they are mere pretenders to the title of ‘superpowers’, and that when threatened, the real superpowers on this planet will not hesitate to take action to defend all mankind from extinction.”*

*(Based on material from the City of Heroes history “Paragon City: The Cold War”.)*

<http://GuardiansOfTheDawn.wordpress.com>

## NEXT ISSUE...



*What happened to Daybright?  
Is she really dead?*

*Plus: See the history of things  
to come with Galatea  
Future, the Last Guardian!*



"Go ahead... run. Run for your life.  
You'll still lose against me."



# CITY OF HEROES GOING ROGUE

[goingrogue.cityofheroes.com](http://goingrogue.cityofheroes.com)

This is a fan-created advertisement, not affiliated with NCSoft or Paragon Studios. City of Heroes, City of Heroes: Going Rogue, all characters and images shown are owned by NCSoft and Paragon Studios. © 2010 NC Interactive, Inc. All rights reserved. All trademarks referenced herein are the properties of their respective owners.

