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FOR TEENS

FUTURE'S GUARDIAN



ISSUE 20
2021



*GALATEA'S
EXTENDED
LIFE
REVEALED!*



CHAMPIONS
ONLINE

PERFECT
WORLD

THE CRUCIBLE



MAY 2021

WWW.COXCOMICS.COM

From another time and from another world, Galatea Future arrived in the world of the Champions to do the one thing she tried so desperately to avoid before... to live.

It's not easy, though, when you're over a thousand years old and suddenly you're given a new life in more ways than one. Life is literally starting over again for her, and yet she is still doing what she does best: serving humanity as...

FUTURE'S GUARDIAN

"THE HOW OF GALATEA" - A CHAMPIONS ONLINE STORY BY DAVID 2

FOR THE PAST DECADE, GALATEA FUTURE HAS KEPT THE ORIGINS OF HER EXISTENCE A CLOSELY-GUARDED SECRET KNOWN ONLY BY A FEW.

BUT IT IS A SECRET THAT HAD TO BE REVEALED TO THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL TO STAVE OFF A WITCH-HUNT ON HERSELF AND HER ASSOCIATES.

AS A CONDITION FOR HER TO CONTINUE TO FREELY OPERATE AS A HERO, GALATEA NOW HAS TO GIVE AN ACCOUNTING OF HER PAST TO A SELECT GROUP OF PEOPLE, AS WELL AS ASSESS THE FULL SCOPE OF HER HYPER-POWERS, BOTH PAST AND PRESENT.

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SADLY, MY DEAR,
I HAVE TO GO.
I HAVE A VERY
IMPORTANT
PATIENT I MUST
ATTEND TO.

AWWW... MORE
IMPORTANT
THAN ME?

WELL ALL MY
PATIENTS ARE
IMPORTANT,
BUT THIS IS A
SPECIAL CASE.

DOCTOR SILVERBACK
SIMIAN SCIENTIST

CAN YOU AT
LEAST TELL ME
WHO IT IS?
I PROMISE IT'LL
STAY BETWEEN US.

NOW YOU KNOW I
CAN'T DO THAT.
THAT IS A SERIOUS
BREACH OF TRUST
BETWEEN DOCTOR
AND PATIENT.

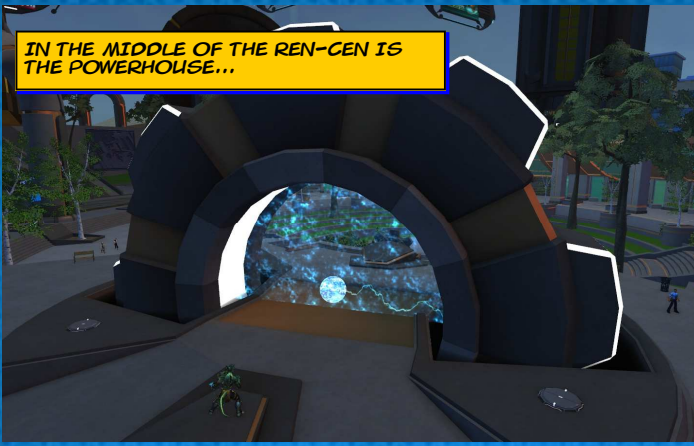
WELL YOU CAN'T
FAULT A GIRL FOR
TRYING.
WHOMEVER HE IS,
I KNOW HE'LL BE IN
GOOD HANDS.

WELL SHE... OR HE...
WILL CERTAINLY BE.
LET ME KNOW IF
THOSE CONTACTS
ACT UP AGAIN.

CLICK
SPEAK.

THIS IS
SPIRALCROSS.
I'VE JUST
CONFIRMED THAT
SILVERBACK IS
MEETING WITH
GALATEA FUTURE.

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE REN-CEN IS THE POWERHOUSE...



... A SUB-DIMENSIONAL TRAINING CENTER FOR HEROES, AND SOMETIMES A SOCIAL CENTER FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC.



GALATEA FUTURE
OTHERWORLD GUARDIAN



HOLD UP GALATEA!



ABOUT WHAT WE DISCUSSED... I DON'T THINK IT'S APPROPRIATE TO BRING THAT MATTER UP IN THE EVALUATION.



YOU KNOW OUR AGREEMENT WITH THE SECURITY COUNCIL,* I HAVE TO GIVE A FULL DISCLOSURE IN BOTH THE EVALUATION AND THE INTERVIEW.

THAT MEANS NO SECRETS, EVEN WHEN IT COMES TO *THAT* MATTER.



MAJOR XAVIER CROSS
PROJECT MYCROFT



(* LAST ISSUE)

DAMMIT GALATEA, WE'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT YOUR BRA SIZE OR HOW FAST YOU CAN GO ACROSS THE CITY.

WE'RE TALKING ABOUT SOMETHING THAT IS POTENTIALLY LIFE-THREATENING TO BOTH YOU AND THE PEOPLE YOU KNOW!



WELL THAT'S GOOD, BECAUSE THE INTERNET FORUMS ALREADY FIGURED OUT MY BRA SIZE AND HOW FAST I CAN FLY.



DON'T THEY KNOW WE CAN HEAR THEM?



THIS IS NOT A JOKING MATTER!
IF THIS GETS OUT, IT COULD CAUSE SOME SERIOUS HARM!



YOU SEE ME LAUGHING OR SMILING OVER THIS?
YOU THINK I WANT TO LET PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT IT?
I'VE BEEN AFRAID OF IT MY WHOLE EXTENDED LIFE!
BUT I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO TELL THEM, AND YOU KNOW IT TOO.

SO I AM GOING TO DO JUST THAT, WHETHER YOU'RE "COMFORTABLE" WITH IT OR NOT!



NOW UNLESS YOU WANT TO ARGUE ABOUT IT IN PUBLIC SOME MORE, I'M GOING TO GO GET POKED AND PRODDED BY A SMART GORILLA.



NO.. I THINK THAT WAS MORE THAN ENOUGH TALKING.



AH! GALATEA!

HELLO DOCTOR.
GOOD TO SEE
YOU AGAIN.



SO... WHAT'S
UP FIRST?



THIS IS A DEFENSIVE
TESTING DRILL.

FOUR LASERS,
EACH WITH A
DIFFERENT POWER
SETTING. EACH
WILL MEASURE
YOUR LEVEL OF
INVULNERABILITY.

WE'RE HERE TO
PUMPI YOU! UP!

AND DON'T
MIND "BENDY"
HERE... SHE
TOOK A HIT ON
LEVEL 2 JUST
BEFORE YOU
GOT HERE.

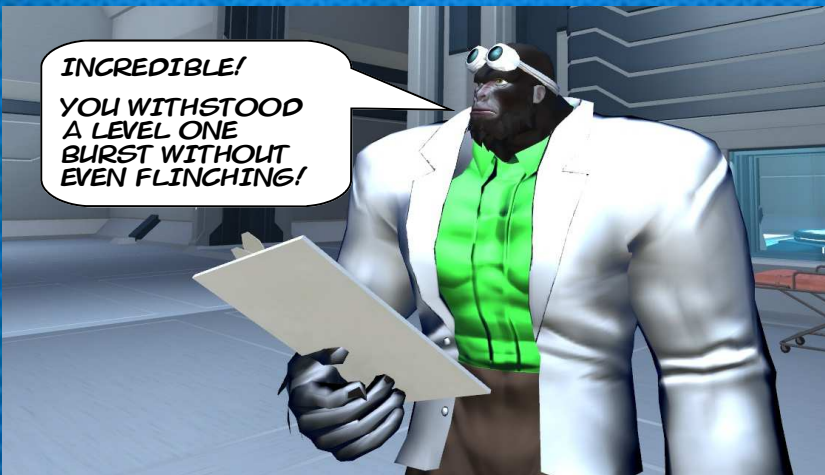


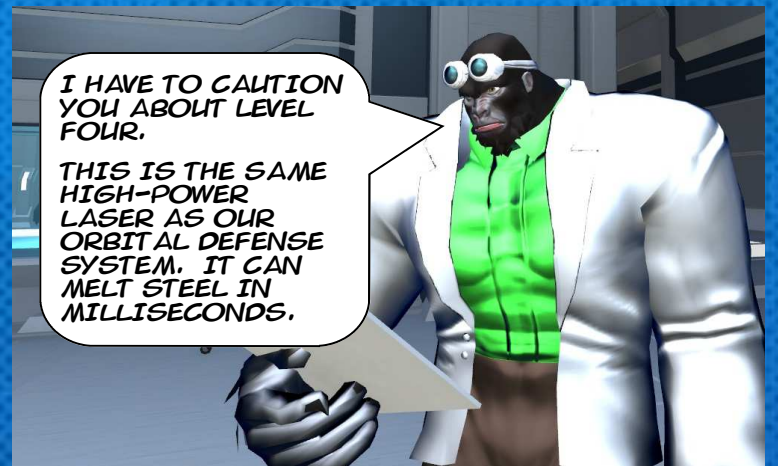
OKAY, HOW
HARD CAN
THAT BE?



WARNING!
LEVEL 1 LASER
BURST IN...
3...2...1...

*** ZOT ***



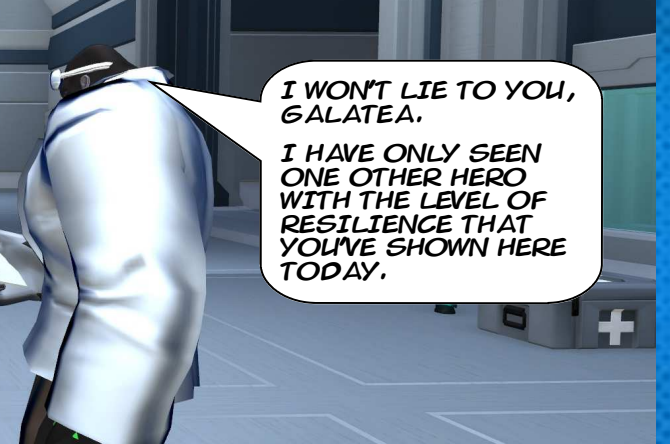


*** KRAK OOOOOOOOOOOOOOM ***







I AM THE CREEEEAM
OF THE CROP... OOH
YEAH! DIG IT!




I WON'T LIE TO YOU,
GALATEA.
I HAVE ONLY SEEN
ONE OTHER HERO
WITH THE LEVEL OF
RESILIENCE THAT
YOU'VE SHOWN HERE
TODAY.




YOUR LEVEL OF
INVULNERABILITY
IS THE SAME AS
IRONCLAD'S.
THAT IS EXTREMELY
RARE!



IT'LL TAKE AN
HOUR FOR ME TO
GET THE NEXT
STAGE SET UP...
SO MAYBE YOU
SHOULD GO TO
YOUR INTERVIEW
NEXT.



GALATEA... HI.
I'M PERIWINKLE
PIPER, BUT YOU
CAN CALL ME
"PERI".



PERI...
DON'T GET ME
WRONG, BUT
YOU'RE A
TELEPATH,
AREN'T YOU?



YOU CAN'T GET MORE DIRECT
THAN THAT.

YES, I AM A TELEPATH, BUT
I'M A LOW-LEVEL ONE. I CAN
ONLY DETECT WHEN PEOPLE
ARE LYING AROUND ME.

IT MAKES ME THE BEST KIND
OF INTERVIEWER.

I'M ACTUALLY ON-LOAN FROM
THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF
INVESTIGATIONS AS PART OF
THE PSIONICS DIVISION.

PROJECT CITADEL ASKED ME
TO INTERVIEW YOU TO MAKE
SURE THAT WHAT YOU TELL ME
IS THE TRUTH.



PERI PIPER
PROJECT CITADEL



I DON'T THINK YOU'LL NEED TO USE THAT ON ME. I'VE PRETTY MUCH OPENED MY LIFE IN THE JOURNAL I'VE SUBMITTED TO CITADEL YESTERDAY.

YEAH, I WASN'T REALLY ABLE TO READ THROUGH IT ALL LAST NIGHT... OVER TEN-THOUSAND PAGES!
I MEAN, HOW CAN ANYONE WRITE THAT MUCH AND SO FAST?



WELL, I STARTED KEEPING THAT JOURNAL A REALLY LONG TIME AGO.

EARTH 20040427-ETA, YEAR: 2053

"WHEN YOU'RE THE LAST LIVING RESIDENT OF A DEAD EARTH, YOU HAVE PLENTY OF TIME ON YOUR HANDS."

"THAT'S RIGHT, YOU CAME FROM TWO DIFFERENT UNIVERSES."



EARTH XHT-S7

"I GREW UP ON A WORLD WHERE PEOPLE GOT THEIR POWERS FROM METEORS."

"THAT WORLD WAS DESTROYED BY A POWER-MAD PSEUDO-GOD CALLED ALOR."

EARTH 20040427-ETA

"MYSELF AND THREE OTHERS ENDED UP ON ANOTHER EARTH WHERE PEOPLE GOT POWERS FROM PANDORA'S BOX."

"THAT WORLD WAS LATER DEVASTATED, FIRST BY AN ACTUAL GOD, AND THEN BY AN EVIL INCARNATE AND RENDERED INHOSPITABLE."

"I EVENTUALLY DISCOVERED THAT THIS WAS ALL PART OF A MASTER PLAN FOR ME TO BECOME POWERFUL ENOUGH TO GO BACK IN TIME AND STOP ALOR."

* ALL OF THESE THINGS HAPPENED IN THE "TIME AND CHANGES" STORYLINE IN "GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN SPOTLIGHT", AVAILABLE THROUGH BATTLEROCK COMICS. >

EARTH 20040427 (PRIME)

"I DID IT, AND IN DOING SO I BECAME A TIME ANOMALY."

"MOST OF MY ADULT TIMELINE HAD TO BE ERASED, AND I ENDED UP HERE."

"OH WOW..."

"THAT EARTH STILL EXISTS, BUT IT ISN'T THE SAME AS THE ONE I LIVED THROUGH."

"THERE'S ANOTHER 'ME' THERE THAT IS LIVING A WHOLE DIFFERENT LIFE BECAUSE OF WHAT I DID IN MY PAST."



ALMOST READY...

YOU KNOW, I DON'T THINK I'VE ACTUALLY BEEN IN THIS PART OF THE TRAINING AREA BEFORE.



IT'S DESIGNED MORE FOR TEAM-TRAINING, ALTHOUGH SOME HEROES USE IT TO MEASURE THEIR FIGHTING SKILLS IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT.



AAAAND.... THERE. DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION TO THE OBSERVATION WINDOW TO MEET YOUR VIRTUAL SPARRING PARTNER FOR TODAY.



IS THAT... BLACK TALON?



THAT'S THE SUPERVILLAIN THAT I BEAT ON MY FIRST DAY HERE TEN YEARS AGO!*

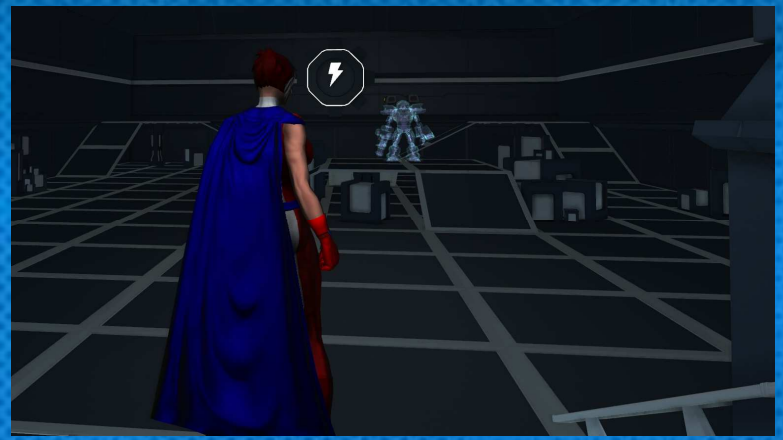
(* WAY BACK IN "THE LOST ADVENTURES OF GALATEA FUTURE" #1, AVAILABLE THROUGH THE BATTLEROCK COMICS WEBSITE.)



YES, I REMEMBER THAT DAY AS VIVIDLY AS YOU.
A QILARR INVASION, POWER DAMPENERS EVERYWHERE, AND I HAD TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOU VIA HOLOGRAM AS I WAS OUTSIDE OF THE CITY AT THE TIME.
AND BLACK TALON WAS THE VILLAIN BEHIND IT ALL.
OR... THE GUY INSIDE THE BLACK TALON ARMOR.

BUT WHILE THIS SIMULATION MAY LOOK LIKE THE BLACK TALON ARMOR AND MIMIC ITS WEAPONRY, THE TACTICAL SIMULATOR HAS BASED ITS SKILL LEVEL TO AS CLOSE TO YOURS AS POSSIBLE.

IT'S ESSENTIALLY WHAT BLACK TALON WOULD BE LIKE IF IT HAD BEEN UPGRADED TO FACE YOU INSTEAD OF DEFENDER.






SO YOU SAID YOU WERE ONCE AT THE LEVEL OF "OMEGA INCARNATE"... WHAT WAS THAT LIKE?


YOU KNOW THAT OLD MOVIE JOKE ABOUT AMPLIFIERS THAT WENT UP TO ELEVEN INSTEAD OF TEN?

WELL, BEING AN ALPHA INCARNATE, THE LOWEST LEVEL, WAS LIKE GOING FROM TEN TO ONE HUNDRED.

EVERYTHING IS JUST AMPLIFIED A HUNDRED-FOLD.



SO WHEN YOU WERE UP TO OMEGA, YOU WERE LIKE... WHAT, A GOD?




THE CLOSEST TO IT... YEAH. I MEAN, NO ALL-SEEING OR ALL-BEING, BUT JUST ABOUT THE REST OF IT.




HOW FAST COULD YOU TRAVEL AS AN OMEGA?

UNAIDED? ONE MICROSECOND SHORT OF THE SPEED OF LIGHT. I WOULDN'T RECOMMEND IT, THOUGH.



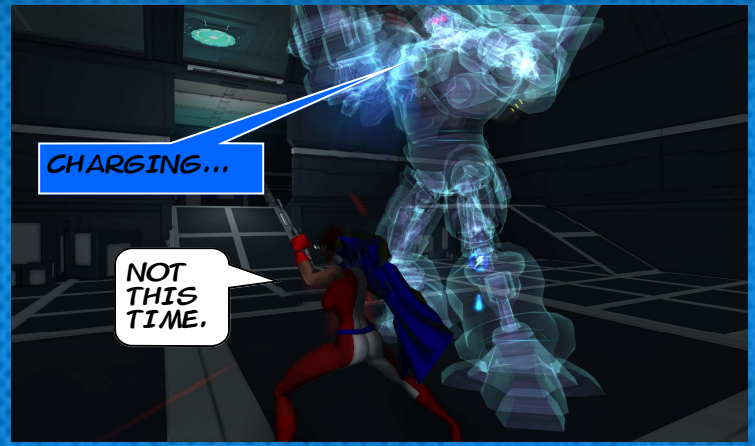
WHEN YOU GET CLOSE TO LIGHTSPEED, THERE'S ALWAYS THE TIME DIFFERENTIAL TO DEAL WITH.

THEN AGAIN, I WORKED WITH A TIME AGENCY BACK THEN, SO I HAD ADDITIONAL DEVICES TO HELP WITH THAT.



I CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO BE THAT POWERFUL.

WELL, HYPER-SPEED WAS JUST ONE OF MY ABILITIES AT THE TIME.



CHARGING...

NOT THIS TIME.



BLACK TALON DEFEATED.



THAT WAS A BIT OF A WORKOUT!
I SHOULD COME DOWN HERE MORE OFTEN TO TRAIN.



WHAT ELSE YOU GOT FOR ME?



I'M SO GLAD YOU ASKED, AS I NEED A LITTLE MORE DATA FOR MY EVALUATION.



RESETTING SIMULATION.
NUMBER OF BLACK TALON UNITS...
THREE.



HOW STRONG WERE YOU AS AN OMEGA?




WELL... IT WAS HARD TO GIVE PRECISE MEASUREMENTS.

I DID HAVE TO MOVE A DYSON SPHERE ONCE THAT WAS THE SIZE OF A WHOLE SOLAR SYSTEM... IF THAT'S ANY INDICATION OF MY HYPER-STRENGTH.

W-WOW! OKAY, HOW ABOUT YOUR SENSES? SIGHT? HEARING? ANY SPECIAL POWERS?

I COULD FOCUS MY VISION DOWN THE PARTICLE LEVEL. I COULD HEAR THE X-RAY SIGNALS OF DISTANT STARS. I COULD EMIT BEAMS OF ENERGY FROM MY EYES OF VARYING FREQUENCY AND WAVELENGTH.




WHEN WE FIRST MET, YOU QUICKLY ASKED ME IF I WAS A TELEPATH.

I TAKE IT YOU'VE HAD SOME EXPERIENCE WITH TELEPATHY BEFORE?



FAR TOO MANY TIMES FOR ME TO COUNT.

I NEVER HAD TELEPATHIC POWERS, BUT THERE HAS BEEN SOMETHING THAT PRICKS ME IN THE BACK OF MY HEAD WHEN A TELEPATH IS ACTIVELY USING THAT POWER AROUND ME.



I DON'T ALWAYS... ...
... LET'S JUST SAY IT'S NOT REALLY A "POWER".

SOMEONE I KNOW GOT CAUGHT UP IN THE "WAKE-EZ" FIASCO A FEW YEARS AGO, AND I NEVER KNEW THEY HAD DEVELOPED TELEPATHIC POWERS UNTIL IT WAS TOO LATE.*

I GUESS IT'S EASIER TO DETECT WHEN SOMEONE IS USING TELEPATHY ON ME WHEN IT'S SOMEONE THAT I DON'T REALLY KNOW.

* DURING THE "PSILENCE OF CONSCIENCE" STORYLINE, ISSUES 7-12.)



ONE MORE TIME, PLEASE.



KRAKOOOM



I BELIEVE YOU DO NOT HAVE "BEAM VISION" AS IT DOES NOT BEHAVE LIKE A NORMAL FOCUSED ENERGY OUTBURST. IT'S MORE OF A "FORCE" PROJECTION.



SO INSTEAD OF TAPPING THE PURE ENERGY THAT GIVES ME MY POWERS, I'M FORCING... WHAT... MY INVULNERABLE AURA AT THEM THROUGH MY EYES?



YES. THAT SOUNDS LIKE AN ACCURATE ASSESSMENT. I'D LIKE TO STUDY YOUR ENERGY CONSUMPTION A BIT FURTHER.

IF YOU'RE THINKING WHAT I AM, THEN I HAVE THE PERFECT PLACE. UNITED NATIONS LUNAR OUTPOST FIFTY-TWO. PROJECT MYCROFT HAS A SHUTTLE READY AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE.

A character in a blue and white suit with a cape stands on a platform, looking towards another character in a red and blue suit who is standing with their back to the camera. The background shows a large, colorful, abstract structure.

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO LUMERIA?

YOU MEAN THE UNDERSEA WORLD THAT THIS ARENA WAS BASED ON?

NOT YET. IF IT'S ANYTHING LIKE THIS, THEN I'M SURE IT'S BEAUTIFUL.

A close-up of the character in the red and blue suit on the left, looking towards the character in the blue and white suit on the right.

WHAT ELSE DO YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT ME?

THERE WAS ONE POWER THAT YOU LISTED THAT I'M SORT OF CONFUSED ABOUT....

"HYPER-INTELLIGENCE".

WHAT... WHAT IS IT? DOES IT MEAN YOU WERE REALLY, REALLY, REALLY SMART?

A close-up of the character in the red and blue suit, looking slightly to the side with a thoughtful expression.


WHOOO

THAT ONE IS A LITTLE TRICKY.

The character in the blue and white suit is standing on a platform, looking towards the character in the red and blue suit who is standing with their back to the camera. The background shows the same large, colorful structure.

OKAY...

YOU SEE THAT ARENA AREA?

The character in the red and blue suit is standing on a platform, looking towards the character in the blue and white suit who is standing with their back to the camera. The background shows the same large, colorful structure.

AT MY PEAK, I COULD TELL YOU EXACTLY HOW EVERY PART OF THAT ARENA WORKED, FROM THE TELEPORTERS DOWN TO THE CHEMICALS IN THE WATER AND THE PHOSPHORESCENT PROPERTIES OF THE PLANTS.

THEN, NOT ONLY COULD I PERFECTLY REPLICATE IT, BUT I COULD EVEN TELL YOU ALL THE DIFFERENT WAYS I COULD IMPROVE IT.

AND ALL OF THAT... JUST BY STANDING HERE AND WATCHING.

YOU... YOU'RE NOT LYING ABOUT THAT!

T-THAT IS... INCREDIBLE!

IT'S MORE THAN JUST INTELLIGENCE.
I COULD FIGURE OUT HOW THINGS WORKED BY LOGICAL PROCESSES.
I COULD SEE THE PATTERNS AND INTUIT THE DETAILS.



THIS WAS THE LEGACY POWER FROM MY BIRTH-FATHER, LIONEL.
THE ONE WHO CREATED ME.



I'M SORRY...
DID YOU SAY...
'CREATED'??
DON'T YOU REALLY MEAN YOU WERE
'BORN'??



EARTH XHT-57

"NOPE, I MEAN 'CREATED'."

"MY BIRTH-FATHER GENETICALLY CREATED ME STARTING AT AGE FOUR WITH ALL OF THE FAMILY ABILITIES."

"HE EVEN GAVE ME MY FIRST NAME...
LEONA POWERS."



"BUT HE DIDN'T JUST GIVE ME A NAME AND POWERS."

"HE ALSO ENCODED AN IMPRINT OF HIS TWISTED MIND, SET TO TRIGGER WHEN I TURNED THIRTEEN."

"IT WAS HIS REVENGE ON THE WORLD FOR THEM FAVORING HIS BROTHER'S HEROIC SIDE OF THE FAMILY OVER HIS OWN HYPER-GENIUS."



"MY COUSIN... WHO RAISED ME AND CONSIDERED ME MORE HIS DAUGHTER, HE SACRIFICED HIMSELF IN TIME AND IN BLOOD TO HELP OVERRIDE LIONEL'S GENETIC PROGRAMMING AND REMAKE ME INTO THE HERO THAT I BECAME*."

"IT WOULD TAKE YEARS AND THE DESTRUCTION OF BOTH MY WORLDS FOR ME TO BE ABLE TO FINALLY COME TO TERMS WITH WHAT WAS DONE."

(* "GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN SPOTLIGHT" #19)

I STILL LIVE WITH IT INSIDE ME. MY DNA IS BONDED WITH AT LEAST TWO OTHER SOURCES.*

I DEDUCTED THAT'S HOW I WAS ABLE TO READILY EVOLVE INTO AN OMEGA INCARNATE.

GENETICALLY, I'M THREE SUPER-POWERED PEOPLE IN ONE.



... "H?". I'M HAVING A HARD TIME COMING TO GRIPS WITH ALL OF THIS...

FIRST, YOU SAY YOU WERE GENETICALLY CREATED, THEN YOU WERE MADE INTO... WHAT... A VILLAIN? AND THEN YOU WERE MADE AGAIN INTO A HERO?

IF I DIDN'T HAVE MY POWER, I'D SAY YOU WERE MAKING ALL THIS UP.

(* EDITOR'S NOTE: THIS IS WHAT SEPARATES THIS VERSION OF GALATEA FROM HER ALTERNATE TIMELINE VERSION IN "THE CITY". IN THE "GALATEA DAWNING" STORYLINE OF "GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN SPOTLIGHT", THAT OTHER VERSION OF GALATEA ACTUALLY SPLIT INTO TWO BEINGS, HERSELF AND LEONA. SHE WAS THEN RECONSTRUCTED AGAIN INTO HER PRESENT-DAY FORM.)



OH NO!!!

CAPES LOOK GREAT ON HEROES, BUT THEY ARE ALSO GREAT STAIN MAGNETS!

BLOOD, DIRT, RAW SEWAGE, RADIOACTIVE WASTE, HYDRAULIC FLUIDS, EXPLOSIVE RESIDUE, ALIEN GOO... THEY ARE ALL QUICK TO FIND THEIR WAYS ONTO YOUR CAPE AND THEY TAKE FOREVER TO GET OUT!

LAUNDRY SERVICES ARE EXPENSIVE, AND THEY DON'T ALWAYS GET THE TROUBLE STAINS OUT.

Nuke It

NUKEIT IS A CUTTING-EDGE CLEANER DESIGNED EXCLUSIVELY FOR CAPES.

NUKEIT IS SAFE FOR CLOTH, LEATHER, SOFT-METAL, EVEN CAPES MADE FROM RE-STABILIZED MOLECULES. WHATEVER IT IS, NUKEIT TO CLEAN IT!

NUKEIT COMES IN BOTH ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRIAL SIZES; PERFECT IF YOU HAVE ONE CAPE TO CLEAN OR A HUNDRED.

NUKEIT IS AVAILABLE AT ALL HERO SUPPLY STORES. PICK SOME UP TODAY AND NUKE YOUR CAPE STAINS AWAY!

DO NOT USE NUKEIT IF YOU ARE ALLERGIC TO NEUTRON RADIATION OR IF YOU GET YOUR POWERS FROM GAMMA RADIATION. CONSULT YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU EXPERIENCE LOSS OF HAIR OR TEETH OR PAINFUL SORES FROM USING CAPES TREATED WITH NUKEIT. DO NOT EXPOSE TO BARE SKIN UNLESS YOU ARE INVULNERABLE. WASH CAPES IN NUKEIT SEPARATE FROM ALL OTHER CLOTHING.



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From a Universe of Pure Imagination



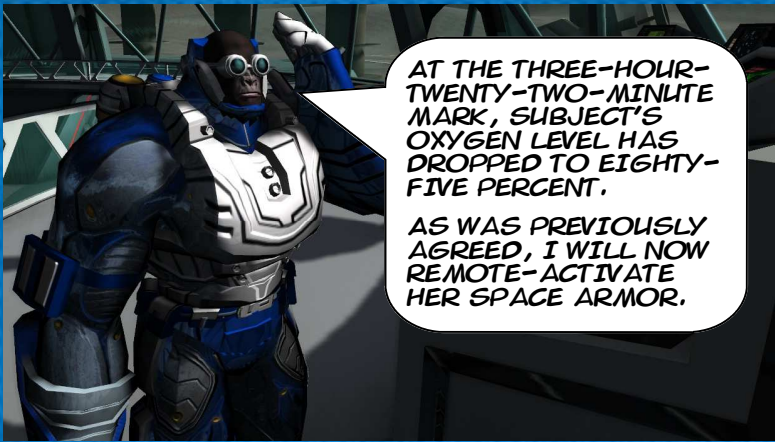
MAJOR DEEJ UNIVERSE

<https://.majordeejuniverse.com>

UNITED NATIONS LUNAR BASE 52

THE MOON, SEA OF VAPORS





AT THE THREE-HOUR-TWENTY-TWO-MINUTE MARK, SUBJECT'S OXYGEN LEVEL HAS DROPPED TO EIGHTY-FIVE PERCENT.

AS WAS PREVIOUSLY AGREED, I WILL NOW REMOTE-ACTIVATE HER SPACE ARMOR.




SO SOON?




IT'S BEEN OVER THREE HOURS, GALATEA. COME ON IN.





TO BE HONEST, I NEVER REALLY NOTICED HOW LONG I WAS OUT THERE WITHOUT A SUIT. ONCE I PUT MYSELF INTO A TRANCE, I JUST SHUT MYSELF OFF FROM EVERYTHING ELSE.

SO YOU NEVER NOTICED THAT YOUR OXYGEN LEVELS WERE DROPPING AND YOUR CARBON DIOXIDE LEVELS WERE REACHING THE TOXIC RANGE.



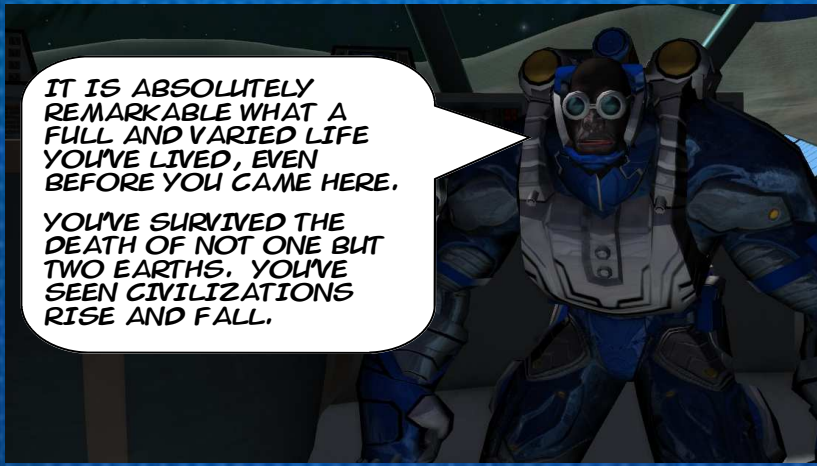
I PROBABLY WOULD HAVE NOTICED EVENTUALLY WHEN THE BURNING IN MY LUNGS WAS TOO STRONG.

I WAS TAUGHT THAT FORM OF MEDIATION FROM THE TIME AGENCY I WORKED WITH.



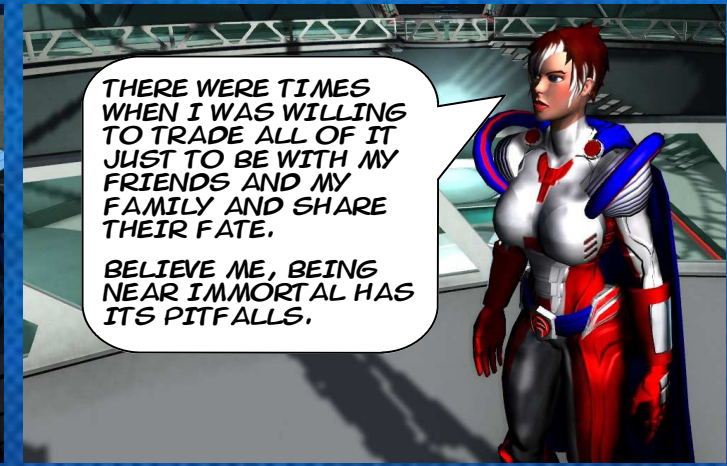
"WHEN I EVENTUALLY MASTERED IT, I WAS IN IT SO DEEP THAT I LITERALLY SKIPPED A WHOLE CENTURY."

"THAT'S REALLY WHY I STOPPED COUNTING BIRTHDAYS AFTER I TURNED 300."



IT IS ABSOLUTELY REMARKABLE WHAT A FULL AND VARIED LIFE YOU'VE LIVED, EVEN BEFORE YOU CAME HERE.

YOU'VE SURVIVED THE DEATH OF NOT ONE BUT TWO EARTHS. YOU'VE SEEN CIVILIZATIONS RISE AND FALL.



THERE WERE TIMES WHEN I WAS WILLING TO TRADE ALL OF IT JUST TO BE WITH MY FRIENDS AND MY FAMILY AND SHARE THEIR FATE.

BELIEVE ME, BEING NEAR IMMORTAL HAS ITS PITFALLS.




THE GREAT PARADOX OF ENHANCED BEINGS.

EVEN AS A GORILLA, I SOMETIMES ENVY MY NON-EVOLVED BRETHREN, WHO STILL LIVE A SIMPLE LIFE, UNAWARE OF THE BEAUTY THE REST OF THE WORLD HOLDS.

AND YET... HERE I AM IN A SPACE SUIT ON THE MOON.

NOT EVEN THE SOVIET ANIMALS MADE THIS THIS FAR IN THE FIFTIES.



LOOK AT IT, GALATEA. SO CLOSE TO EARTH AND YET SO FAR. AND YOU CAN COME HERE ANYTIME YOU WANT.

YES... BUT IT'S REALLY BORING ONCE YOU GET PAST THE THRILL OF BEING OUT HERE. THE MOON IS... EMPTY AND COLD AND PRETTY MUCH DEAD. THERE AREN'T ENOUGH PEOPLE ABLE TO COME UP HERE AND MAKE IT WORTH STAYING.




WHEN I WAS AN INCARNATE, I COULD TRAVEL ANYWHERE WITHOUT NEEDING A SHIP OR EVEN A SPACESUIT.

EARTH 20040427-ETA, THE FAR FUTURE...



"BACK THEN, GOING FROM ONE SIDE OF THE GALAXY TO THE OTHER WAS LIKE A SUNDAY DRIVE FOR ME."



"WORKING WITH THE TIME AGENCY, I HAD ACCESS TO THE AEGIS ARMOR. IT WAS A SPECIAL SUIT DESIGNED BY THE GREEK GOD PROMETHEUS AND WAS MADE JUST FOR ME."

"WITH IT, I HAD FULL ACCESS TO THE TIME AGENCY ITSELF AND ALL IT CAN DO."

"COMBINED WITH MY OMEGA-INCARNATE STATUS, IT LITERALLY PUT ME ON THE LEVEL OF GODS."

"I SAW STARS BORN IN STELLAR NURSERIES. I FLEW IN AND OUT OF SUPERMASSIVE BLACK HOLES. I EVEN RODE THE BLAST-WAVE OF A SUPERNOVA!"

"I MEAN... COMPARED TO ALL OF THAT... THE MOON IS JUST... BORING."

THERE WAS A QUESTION THAT PROJECT CITADEL WANTED ME TO ASK YOU THAT'S RELATED TO A MORE RECENT SITUATION.



I FIGURED THERE WOULD BE AT LEAST ONE. ASK AWAY.



WHEN YOU FIRST ENCOUNTERED WATCHER TWELVE AND SINNAMON KITTEN*... HOW DID YOU KNOW THEY WEREN'T FROM THIS UNIVERSE?



(*THE CRUCIBLE* #36)

I REALLY DIDN'T AT FIRST. THEY BLENDED IN WITH ALL THE OTHER HEROES IN THE REN-CEN.



BUT THEN I CAUGHT SIGHT OF THE DEVICE THAT WAS ON TWELVE'S WRIST. THE NAVIX. AND I REMEMBERED THE LAST ONES THAT WORE THOSE DEVICES.



EARTH 20040427-ETA

YEAR: 2055

"THE FIRST TIME WAS NOT LONG AFTER THE EARTH DIED."



"BETWEEN TWO DEVASTATING CRISIS EVENTS, THE EARTH COULD NO LONGER SUSTAIN LIFE."

"A RACE OF SYMBIOTIC COSMIC BEINGS HELPED ME GATHER AS MANY SURVIVORS AS POSSIBLE AND PUT THEM ON SPACE ARKS TO GO TO OTHER WORLDS."



"I WAS A BETA INCARNATE AT THE TIME. I COULD SURVIVE THE RADIATION AND THE SCORCHED CONDITIONS."

"I WOULD BE JOINING THEM IN SPACE AFTER I COMPLETED MY LAST MISSION THERE."




WHAT WAS SO IMPORTANT THAT YOU NEEDED TO STAY BEHIND ON A DEAD PLANET?

THAT EARTH HAD A LOT MORE EXPOSURE TO OTHER DIMENSIONS THAN THIS ONE. THERE WAS DIMENSIONAL TECH EVERYWHERE. MEDICAL TELEPORTERS, HERO GROUP PORTAL DEVICES, FREE-FORMING PORTALS, EVEN ACCESS TO A FLOATING NIGHTCLUB AND SKI CHALET IN ANOTHER DIMENSION.



IT WAS A HUGE RISK TO LEAVE ANY OF IT BEHIND.

SO IT WAS MY JOB AS THE "LAST GUARDIAN OF EARTH" TO GATHER WHATEVER DEVICES REMAINED AND EITHER DESTROY THEM OR CONFISCATE THEM AND STORE THEM SOMEPLACE SAFE SO I COULD REPURPOSE THEM.



I HAD THE MEANS THROUGH THE TIME AGENCY TO BRING WHATEVER DEVICES WERE NEEDED TO THE "NEW EARTHS" SO THE SURVIVORS COULD HAVE THE EDGE IN SETTING UP THEIR NEW HOMES.

I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT IT WAS LIKE FOR YOU TO HAVE TO STAY WHEN EVERYONE ELSE WAS BEING CARRIED AWAY TO A NEW WORLD.



"WORLDS', ACTUALLY. PLURAL. THERE WERE FOUR NEW EARTHS THE SURVIVORS WERE HEADED TO."

"AND... AT THE TIME I WAS PRETTY NUMB."

"EVERYONE I KNEW... MY FRIENDS... MY ADOPTED FAMILY... EVEN THE MAN I LOVED... THEY WERE ALREADY DEAD."

"ALL I HAD LEFT WAS THIS; MY DUTY AS THE LAST GUARDIAN."

"EVEN IN THE RUINS OF CITIES, THERE WERE STILL AREAS WHERE TECH REMAINED UNTOUCHED."

"I HAD TO TRAVEL TO EACH CITY, EACH TOWN, EACH BASE AND SHELTER, AND MAKE SURE NO DIMENSIONAL TECH OF ANY KIND WAS LEFT."

"THAT'S WHEN I FIRST SAW SOMEONE WEARING A NAVIX."

EXCUSE ME.
I'M PRETTY SURE THAT'S NOT YOURS.

"I TRIED TO BE POLITE."

"IT WASN'T HUMAN. THAT MUCH I KNEW. AND IT WASN'T FROM ANY ALIEN SPECIES THAT I KNEW FROM ANY UNIVERSE."

WHAM!

"I HAD TO BE A LITTLE MORE FORCEFUL TO GET ITS ATTENTION."

PING

73 892 23254K VJ
884250 361 32 4
3600 422 034=

"THE GAUNTLETS ON ITS ARMS STARTED MAKING NOISES."

PING
PING

"I WAS READY FOR A FIGHT..."

"... WHEN SUDDENLY IT JUST DISAPPEARED."

"ONLY TO REAPPEAR WITH DIFFERENT WEAPONS."



"I HIT IT EVEN HARDER BEFORE IT COULD PULL THE TRIGGER."

★WHAM!★



"ONLY TO DISAPPEAR AGAIN RIGHT BEFORE IT HIT THE FLOOR."



"I KNEW I WAS DEALING WITH A TELEPORTER."

"I OPENED UP ALL MY HYPER-SENSSES."

"I COULD SMELL THE WHIFF OF OZONE AS SPACE FOLDED."

"I COULD HEAR THE FAINT CRACKLE OF AMBIENT ENERGY."

"IT WANTED TO APPEAR BEHIND ME AND ATTACK."

"I TURNED JUST AS IT STARTED FIRING AT ME."

"ITS GUNS WERE SHOOTING SOME SORT OF PHASED ENERGY BURSTS."

"I'M SURE THEY WERE MEANT TO BE LETHAL, BUT NOT TO ME."

SCREE
SCREE
SCREE
SCREE
SCREE





"SO I HIT IT WITH SOME OF MY OWN POWER."

"OLD-FASHIONED BEAM VISION."



PING
PING


"I BEAT IT. BUT AS I GOT CLOSER, THE DEVICES ON ITS ARMS WERE SOUNDING WILDLY"



"AND THEN SUDDENLY IT JUST VANISHED."



WHAT THE HELL JUST HAPPENED?

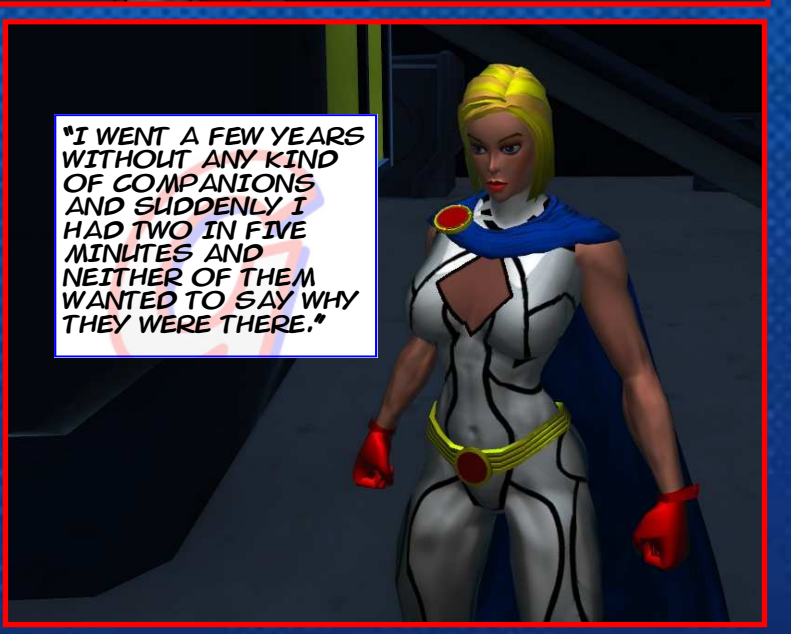


THAT WAS A SCROUNGER... COUNT YOURSELF LUCKY, MA'AM.

"WHO MEVER IT WAS, HE WAS DEATHLY QUIET UNTIL HE STARTED TALKING."



WE'LL TALK SOME MORE.... SOON...



"I WENT A FEW YEARS WITHOUT ANY KIND OF COMPANIONS AND SUDDENLY I HAD TWO IN FIVE MINUTES AND NEITHER OF THEM WANTED TO SAY WHY THEY WERE THERE."



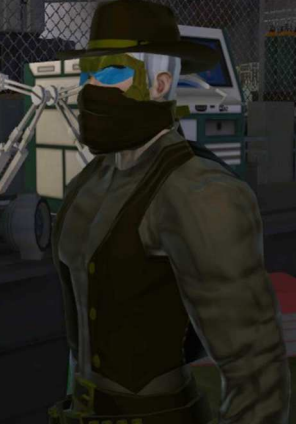
SO DID THAT
GLY EVER
COME BACK?

JUST A FEW
HOURS LATER.



"HE APPEARED IN THE
OLD ARMY BUNKER I
WAS USING TO STORE
ALL THE DEVICES."

"I HAD MY HYPER-
SENSSES OPENED UP
SO I KNEW WHEN HE
WOULD SHOW."



"HE SAID HIS NAME
WAS HUNTER SIXTEEN,
AND HE WORKED FOR A
GROUP OF MULTIVERSE
BEINGS THAT WOULD
HUNT CREATURES LIKE
THE 'SCROUNGER' FOR
USING DIMENSIONAL
TECHNOLOGY."

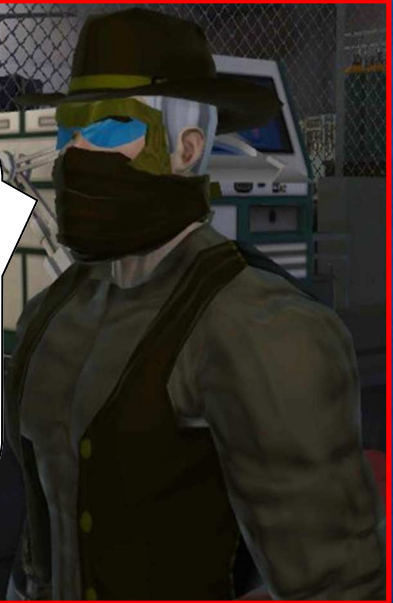


"I TOLD HIM ABOUT
THE TIME AGENCY I
WORKED FOR AND
MY MISSION."

"HE DIDN'T SEEM
TO LIKE EITHER OF
THOSE THINGS."

"THEN HE POINTED TO THE
DEVICE ON HIS WRIST...
THE NAVIX... AND HE SAID
IT WAS GIVING BAD
READINGS ABOUT ME."

"APPARENTLY IT DIDN'T LIKE
AN INCARNATE-LEVEL BEING
USING DIMENSIONAL TECH."



I GOTTA LET MY
BOSSSES KNOW
ABOUT YOU.
BUT.. FAIR
WARNING... IF
MYSELF OR
SOMEONE ELSE
LIKE ME SHOWS UP
WEARING THIS
KIND OF DEVICE...

...IT'S NOT GOING
TO BE ANY GOOD
FOR YOU.



"AND THEN HE VANISHED."

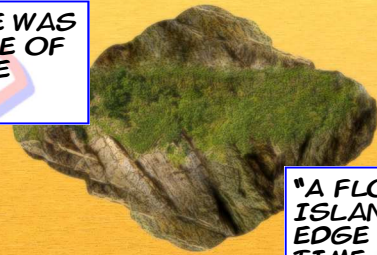
"I HOPED THAT WAS
THE LAST I WOULD
EVER SEE OF HIM."



OF COURSE...
HE DID COME
BACK AGAIN.

NEAR THE END OF TIME.

"THE FINAL TIME WAS
IN MY OWN HOME OF
SORTS NEAR THE
TIME AGENCY."



"A FLOATING
ISLAND ON THE
EDGE OF A MASSIVE
TIME ANOMALY."

"I HAD CARVED OUT A
HIDEAWAY USING
TESSERACT TECHNOLOGY
AND SOMEHOW HE
MANAGED TO FIND ME."



HELLO
AGAIN.

"MIND YOU, THIS WAS
CENTURIES AFTER I
LAST SAW HIM."

"I THINK I WAS A
ZETA-LEVEL
INCARNATE THEN."



YOU KNOW
WHY I'M HERE,
GALATEA.


MY BOSSES
SEE YOU AS A
PROBLEM.



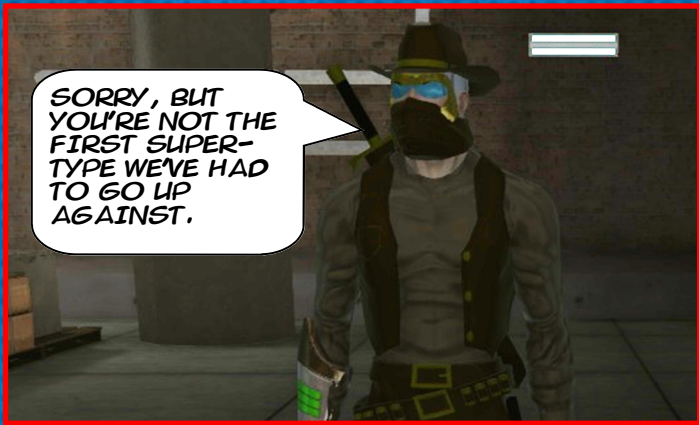
ANY CHANCE I
COULD SPEAK TO
THEM MYSELF?

EXPLAIN MY
SITUATION TO
THEM?

WISH YOU COULD.
BUT ONCE THEY
MAKE UP THEIR
MINDS, THERE'S
NO TURNING BACK.
I'M HERE TO TAKE
YOU DOWN.



I WOULDN'T IF I WERE
YOU, HUNTER.
PHYSICALLY YOU ARE NO
MATCH FOR ME.
I'M GIVING YOU ONE
CHANCE TO WALK AWAY.



SORRY, BUT YOU'RE NOT THE FIRST SUPER-TYPE WE'VE HAD TO GO UP AGAINST.



"HE DREW TWO ENERGY SWORDS THAT EMITTED SOME SORT OF RADIOACTIVE ENERGY."



YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT?

"MY SPECTRUM-VISION TOLD ME THE ENERGY WAS VERY SIMILAR TO A RADIOACTIVE SUBSTANCE THAT I KNEW CALLED XENONITE."



"IN THAT UNIVERSE, XENONITE WAS A LETHAL SUBSTANCE FOR CERTAIN SUPER-POWERED BEINGS."



DON'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN YOU.

"JUST ONE PROBLEM..."



"... I WASN'T ONE OF THOSE BEINGS."

KA-POW!

"I FELT SORRY FOR SIXTEEN. I KNEW THAT HE WAS JUST FOLLOWING ORDERS."

"BUT I ALSO KNEW THAT OTHERS WOULD EVENTUALLY FOLLOW HIM HERE."

"HIS NAVIX DEVICE WAS MAKING A LOT OF NOISE; SENDING AN ALARM."

PING
PING
PING

"IT WAS READY TO TELEPORT HIM AWAY."

"I HAD TO ACT FAST."

"I FIGURED OUT HOW TO TAKE IT OFF HIS WRIST WITHOUT HAVING TO CUT OFF HIS HAND AND BEFORE IT COULD TELEPORT HIM."

"THEN I TOOK IT TO MY CONTROL ROOM."

"WITHIN MINUTES MY HYPER-INTELLIGENCE SHOWED ME HOW THE DEVICE WORKED."

MY NAME IS GALATEA, AND I WANT YOU TO LISTEN VERY CAREFULLY.

"I WAS NOT ONLY ABLE TO REPLICATE THE NAVIX, BUT I WAS ABLE TO INCORPORATE ITS FUNCTIONS INTO MY OWN DEVICES."

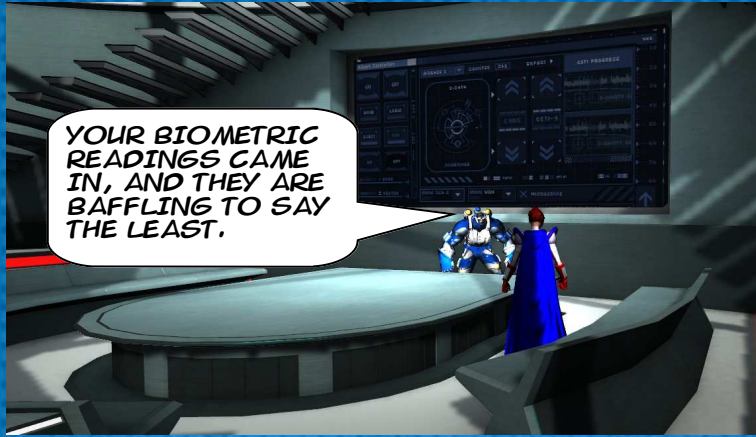
"I TALKED WITH SOMEONE CALLED A JUDGE. I EXPLAINED TO HIM WHY I WAS THERE AND ASKED HIS BOSSES TO LEAVE ME ALONE AND TO LET ME DO MY JOB."

THANKFULLY THEY AGREED.


BUT WHEN I SPOTTED WATCHER TWELVE'S NAVIX, I THOUGHT HE WAS ANOTHER HUNTER THAT WAS SENT TO KILL ME.

IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR ME TO REALIZE THAT HE AND HIS COMPANION WERE JUST LOST.


I'M GLAD IT WAS JUST THAT. I'M NOT AN INCARNATE ANYMORE. I COULDN'T EVEN TELL YOU HOW THAT DEVICE WORKS NOW, NEVER MIND TRY TO REPLICATE IT.




YOUR BIOMETRIC READINGS CAME IN, AND THEY ARE BAFFLING TO SAY THE LEAST.




YOU WERE ON THE SURFACE OF THE MOON WITH FULL AND UNOBSTRUCTED EXPOSURE TO THE SUN FOR OVER THREE HOURS, AND YET YOUR STORED ENERGY LEVELS ONLY WENT UP TWO PERCENT.



ONE WOULD EXPECT A BEING WITH POWERS SIMILAR TO YOURS WOULD BE SUPERCHARGED BY SUCH EXPOSURE. AND YET... YOU WEREN'T.



THAT'S BECAUSE MY POWERS DON'T COME FROM THE SUN. I USED TO BELIEVE THEY DID TOO, BUT I LEARNED THEY DON'T. MY POWERS COME FROM DARK ENERGY.




DARK ENERGY? YOU MEAN THE THEORETICAL FORCE CONNECTED TO DARK MATTER THAT BINDS THE UNIVERSE TOGETHER? IT'S REAL?




VERY MUCH SO.

I HAD THEORIZED IT DURING THE FIRST MEGA-CRISIS ON THE OTHER ADOPTED EARTH, WHEN THE LACK OF SUNLIGHT DID NOT LESSEN MY POWER LEVELS AS IT DID OTHERS.



IT WOULD TAKE A COUPLE OF DECADES OF CONVERSATION, BUT PROMETHEUS HIMSELF ADMITTED THAT MY POWERS ARE CHARGED BY THE ABSORBING OF DARK ENERGY.



THE REASON WHY IT TAKES SO LONG FOR MY POWER LEVELS TO INCREASE IS BECAUSE OUR SUN BLOCKS OUT MOST OF THE DARK ENERGY LIKE IT DOES ALL OTHER COSMIC ENERGIES.

THAT WOULD CHANGE SHOULD I LEAVE THE HELIOSPHERE.

LIMITLESS POWER
AND POTENTIAL...

... AND, I WOULD
PRESUME, ZERO
VULNERABILITIES.

WELL, NOT ENTIRELY TRUE.

I'M STILL VULNERABLE TO
PSIONIC ATTACKS, EVEN IF
THEY CAN'T CONTROL ME
THANKS TO SOME GOOD
MENTAL BLOCKS GIVEN TO
ME BY A FRIEND.*

(* ISSUE #12)

I'M JUST AS
VULNERABLE TO MAGIC
AS ANYONE ELSE.

I CAN GET
OVERWHELMED DURING
THE BLOOD MOON OR
ANY NIGHTMARE EVENT.

AND THEN...

... THERE IS
C-ANITE.

"C-ANITE"?

"ULTRA-RARE
ELEMENT... 233
ON THE EXPANDED
PERIODIC TABLE
OF ELEMENTS."



"IT'S THE ONE
SUBSTANCE THAT
CAN TAKE AWAY
MY POWERS."

I PRESUME THIS
ELEMENT CAN
NEGATE THE DARK
ENERGY STORED IN
YOUR CELLS,
THEREBY RENDERING
YOU POWERLESS.

FOR STARTERS.

MY FATHER CREATED IT AS A
MEANS TO STOP OR EVEN TO
KILL ME SHOULD I BECOME A
THREAT TO HIM.


IT CAME ACROSS TO THE
OTHER ADOPTED WORLD
WHEN I DID, AND I
DESPERATELY HOPE IT DID
NOT CROSS OVER HERE.

C-ANITE NOT ONLY ROBS ME
OF MY POWERS, BUT IT ALSO
POISONS MY BODY.


IF I AM EXPOSED TO IT LONG
ENOUGH, I DIE. PAINFULLY.

YOU CAN UNDERSTAND WHY I
WAS HESITANT TO REVEAL IT
TO ANYONE.

I TRUST THAT YOU CAN KEEP
THIS BETWEEN US.



AS ALWAYS, GALATEA, YOUR SECRETS ARE SAFE WITH ME.



THAT'S GOOD, BECAUSE IF WORD OF C-ANITE GOT OUT, CERTAIN PEOPLE WOULD BE SCOURING THE UNIVERSE FOR IT.




IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE WE NEED TO DO HERE? I'M A LITTLE ANXIOUS TO GET BACK HOME.

I AGREE. AND... THIS SPACE SUIT IS GETTING A LITTLE ITCHY.



ANY CHANCE YOU HAVE SOME OF THAT ASTRONAUT DRINK HERE?



SORRY... I FOUND OUT JUST BEFORE WE LEFT EARTH THAT WE NEEDED TO RESTOCK THE STATION SUPPLIES... AND I SORT OF USED THE LAST OF IT A WHILE AGO.

ARE THERE ANY KIND OF LIQUID DRINKS WE COULD BRING FOR THE TRIP BACK?



I THINK I HAVE A FEW RE-HYDRATED PACKS OF MY SMOOTHIES... BERRY-BANANA.

YOU HAVE GOT TO BE KIDDING...*

(* EDITOR'S NOTE: NOPE, THAT REALLY IS HER FAVORITE DRINK IN ANY UNIVERSE.)

U.N.T.I.L. SHUTTLE
X-RAY SEVEN TO
U.N.T.I.L. M.C.
CONTROL...



WE HAVE CLEARED
LUNAR ORBIT AND ARE
EN-ROUTE TO EARTH.
E.T.A. TWO HOURS.

U.N.T.I.L. HEADQUARTERS

CONFIRMED,
X-RAY SEVEN.
SEE YOU WHEN
YOU GET HERE.

SO... GALATEA
IS ON HER WAY
BACK.
WHAT'S YOUR
IMPRESSION
OF HER?

TO BE HONEST,
MAJOR, I DON'T
KNOW WHAT TO
MAKE OF HER.

GALATEA TOLD ME
ABOUT A LIFE SO
FANTASTIC THAT
EVEN DELUSIONAL
NARCISSISTS
COULDN'T DREAM IT.

AND YET...

... SHE WASN'T
LYING ABOUT
ANY OF IT.
SHE REALLY IS
ALL THAT SHE
SAYS SHE IS.



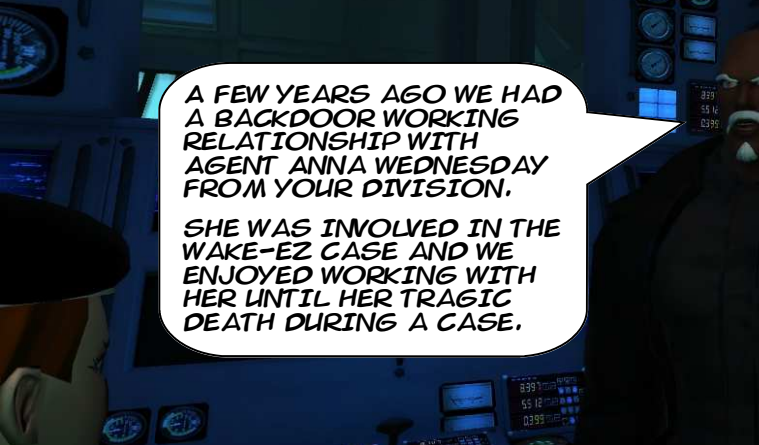
I APPRECIATE YOUR CANDOR ON THIS, AGENT...

... WHICH IS WHY I WOULD LIKE YOU TO WORK FOR PROJECT MYCROFT.



WHAT?

YOU'D STILL BE WITH THE F.B.I. IF YOU WISH, BUT YOU'D BE WORKING WITH MY GROUP INSTEAD OF PROJECT CITADEL.



A FEW YEARS AGO WE HAD A BACKDOOR WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH AGENT ANNA WEDNESDAY FROM YOUR DIVISION.

SHE WAS INVOLVED IN THE WAKE-EZ CASE AND WE ENJOYED WORKING WITH HER UNTIL HER TRAGIC DEATH DURING A CASE.


I KNOW RELATIONS BETWEEN THE U.N. AND THE U.S. AREN'T THE BEST RIGHT NOW...

BUT I REALLY COULD USE SOMEONE WITH YOUR UNIQUE SKILLS AND POWER TO HELP SORT THROUGH THE THINGS GOING ON HERE.



I DON'T KNOW, MAJOR...

MY BOSSES WEREN'T REALLY HAPPY WITH THE ARRANGEMENT WITH CITADEL AS IT WERE.




BUT... IF IT MEANS SPENDING MORE TIME WITH YOUR TEAM... THEN, OKAY.

IF YOU CAN GET IT PAST MY BOSSES.



I'M SURE WE CAN WORK SOMETHING OUT.
WELCOME TO THE TEAM.



KEIRA FYRE
ELEMENTAL ARCHER

REN-CEN, SEVERAL HOURS LATER...



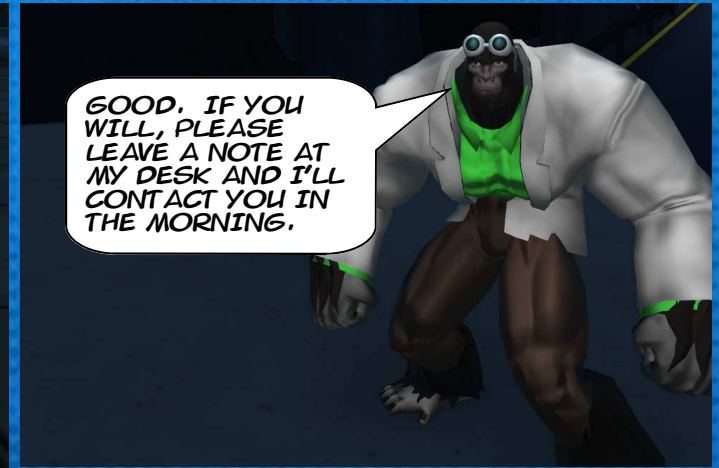
I'M SORRY, SPIRALCROSS, BUT I'VE HAD A VERY BUSY DAY AND I'M ABOUT TO CALL IT A NIGHT.



THAT'S OKAY, DOCTOR. IT'S JUST A MINOR ISSUE. IT CAN WAIT UNTIL TOMORROW.



GOOD. IF YOU WILL, PLEASE LEAVE A NOTE AT MY DESK AND I'LL CONTACT YOU IN THE MORNING.



OF COURSE. GOOD NIGHT, DOCTOR!





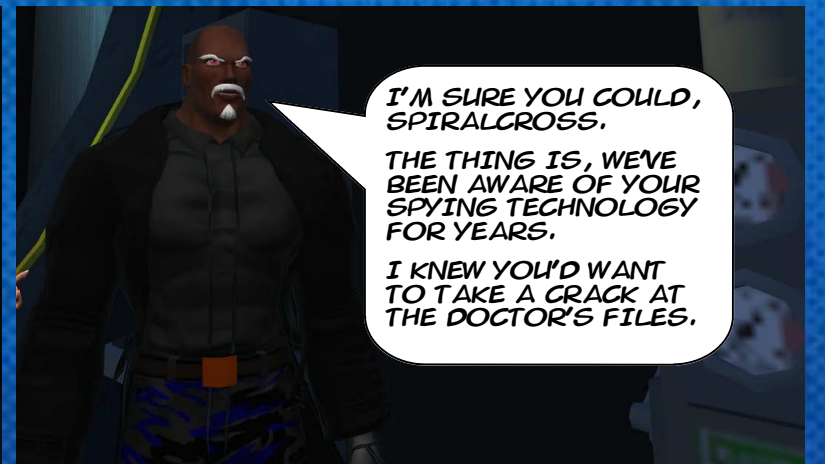
WHAT DO YOU MEAN
"FILE NOT FOUND"?
I SAW YOU UPLOAD
IT IN HERE!



THAT DOESN'T LOOK
LIKE THE GOOD
DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT
BOOK THAT YOU'RE
TRYING TO ACCESS.



MAJOR CROSS!
I CAN EXPLAIN.



I'M SURE YOU COULD,
SPIRALCROSS.
THE THING IS, WE'VE
BEEN AWARE OF YOUR
SPYING TECHNOLOGY
FOR YEARS.
I KNEW YOU'D WANT
TO TAKE A CRACK AT
THE DOCTOR'S FILES.



UNFORTUNATELY
FOR YOU, THEY'VE
ALREADY BEEN
MOVED TO SECURE
U.N.T.I.L. SERVERS.
SO HOW ABOUT YOU
AND I GO TALK
WITH DEFENDER FOR
A WHILE?

SIGH
I DON'T SUPPOSE
I CAN TALK YOU
OUT OF IT, CAN I?

NOT FAR...

SPEAK.

IT'S MESSENGER.
WE HAVE
SILVERBACK'S
DATA.

SPIRALCROSS
GOT CAUGHT, BUT
THANKFULLY OUR
OTHER RESOURCE
PULLED THROUGH.



MIKE MESSENGER
X-TEND SERVICES

MISS SPYTECH WAS ALWAYS
TOO FAMILIAR WITH OTHER
HEROES TO BE ABLE TO PULL
OFF THAT KIND OF OPERATION.

I AGREE. THANKFULLY
WE DIDN'T RELY JUST
ON HER SKILLS.

SO I PRESUME WE
DELIVER THE DATA
RIGHT TO DOCTOR
FOSWELL AS AGREED?

FOSWELL CONTRACTED
VARTCH FOR THE DATA.
HE PAID IN FULL.
VARTCH DELIVERS
WHAT IS PROMISED.

OF COURSE, SIR.
I'LL PERSONALLY
DELIVER THE DATA
TO HIM.

SEE TO IT.
CLICK

HOW WILL GALATEA'S
STOLEN DATA BE
USED AGAINST HER?
FIND OUT IN FUTURE
ISSUES!

GUARDIAN WORDS

Words of wisdom from writer and creator David 2.

Ten Years and the “Unknown Years”

It's hard to believe that it has been ten years since our formerly-god-level heroine made the jump from “The City” over to Millennium City.

Galatea Future, or simply “Galatea” as she considered herself back then, was always going to be an alternate version of the fan-favorite Galatea Powers from “The City”. Her history was revealed in the “Time and Changes” storyline of the “Guardians of the Dawn Spotlight” comic series. The ending of the storyline was also meant to be the end of this version of Galatea herself. Her whole “incarnate” past erased from that timeline so the current “Galatea” would continue with a new and untold future.

Who would have thought that less than a year after that storyline ended that this Galatea would be given new life in an entirely different universe? For a second time, no less!

With the revelation of Galatea's extra-dimensional origins being revealed to certain groups, this gave us the opportunity to revisit the “old” Galatea Future from the “Time and Changes” storyline and show just how powerful she had to be in order to take on, as she described them, “gods and demons”.

The concept of an incarnate being was something that was still in development in “The City” when it shut down in 2012. “Time and Changes” happened just as their incarnate program was still being introduced. All that was known at the time was that it would start at “Alpha” and end in “Omega”. This gave creators like yours truly a little latitude in creativity about what those other levels would be and how “powerful” they would be.

Going over her past also allowed us to answer a question some of you had when Galatea Future first appeared in “The Crucible” #36. Namely, how Galatea recognized Watcher Twelve and knew about “hunters” and “scroungers”, and how she knew anyone wearing a Navix device was trouble. Once again, we had worked with Von Phillips over at CoXComics.com coming up with the designs for both the “scrounger” and with Hunter Sixteen.

Showing Galatea's past during those “unknown years” was something we had to be tricky with. There were obvious rights issues with showing material from “The City”, but with Galatea being over a thousand years old and spanning literal centuries, it's easy to understand how her look could change over the years. And, just like we did with Leona Powers, we were fortunate to be able to get as “close” as possible with costume options available in Champions Online when it came to her much-referenced Aegis armor.

With all of these references to Galatea's past, there are some things that might need a little more explanation.

Xenonite - Back in “The City”, there was a comedic story about a user hero named Ascendant (*with an “a”*), who conversed with his Uncle Saul, who was his agent. His uncle had lined up all sorts of promotions and merchandizing for his client, all of which were horrendous, not to mention hazardous.

But the biggest was “Ascendant-O's”, a joke cereal that claimed to contain Xenonite, marketed as “the source of Ascendant's powers”. Except it was really his weakness. And, as mentioned in this issue, highly radioactive. Boxes of the cereal reportedly needed lead foil to protect people. Oh, and the box reportedly also gave away Ascendant's secret identity inside.

Perhaps the greatest honor any MMO user could have was bestowed on the late Tre Chipman - a.k.a. Ascendant - when “The City” incorporated references to “Saul” and “Ascendant” in NPC conversations at phone booths. His comedic banter between “Ascendant” and “Uncle Saul” became canon in “The City”.



Continues on next page...

Dyson Sphere - A Dyson Sphere is a hypothetical mega-creation imagined by theoretical mathematician Freeman Dyson as a way to absolutely maximize the use of a star.

The idea is to create a ring around the star, including whatever planets you wanted to incorporate inside. From there you continue building another ring intersecting that first one, and then another one, and then eventually create a whole sphere around the star and the planets. So the planets would still orbit around the star, but this time inside the sphere. The inside surface of the sphere could then be made habitable, while also protecting from outside threats like meteors, comets, and even gamma ray bursts.

How big would a Dyson Sphere be? That would depend on how much space the builder would want to encompass.

If we were to use our own solar system as a guide, and we incorporate everything in the solar system from the sun out to the Ort cloud, including all the planets and planetoids, then the Dyson Sphere would be massive.

The diameter of our solar system from the sun to the end of the Ort Cloud is an estimated five trillion miles wide. But, at that distance, our sun would be barely seen from the walls, never mind get the “full effect” of the sun.

Going from the sun to the planetoid Pluto and the Kuiper belt would only be about seven-and-a-half billion miles wide (*according to Scholastic.com*), so let’s use that. That means a superstructure about seven-and-a-half billion miles in diameter, full of planets, including gas giants, in orbit around a star being used as the primary source of energy. Think of the billions or even trillions of lives it could hold!

That would put the Dyson Sphere in the same league as some of the giant stars in the galaxy. And it would still pale in comparison to the supergiant and hypergiant stars.

Still, the mass of that hypothetical Dyson Sphere, with all of the combined stellar bodies inside, would be the same as a giant star. As a solid structure, it would have all the mass and gravity, but none of the luminosity, so it would not be seen in the dark of space. If it were to approach, say, a habitable world, they would not be able to see it until the light of their star reflected off the massive structure, and even then it would only be seen as a massive wall of metal.

And our heroine, as an incarnate of some level, was powerful enough to move that.

That is truly being in league with gods.

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NEXT ISSUE...

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