

"PSILENCE OF CONSCIENCE" - CONCLUSION



ISSUE 12
2014

FUTURE'S GUARDIAN

HYPER-
SIZED 50
PAGES!



CHAMPIONS
ONLINE

PERFECT
WORLD

HE IS THE COOLEST SUPERVILLAIN YOU WILL EVER KNOW!

FOXBAT!



WHILE HEROES COME AND GO, SUPERVILLAINS LIKE
FOXBAT ENDURE!

WHY HAVE COMICS FEATURING FLASH-IN-THE-PAN
PRETENDERS WHEN FOXBAT IS THE REAL DEAL?

DEMAND THAT FOXBAT BE GIVEN HIS OWN COMIC SERIES!

FOXBAT DESERVES HIS OWN COMIC SERIES!

YOU SHOULD GO TO YOUR COMIC STORE AND DEMAND
THAT SOMEONE MAKE A FOXBAT COMIC SERIES JUST
SO MILLENNIUM CITY'S LIVING LEGEND CAN PROVE TO THE
WORLD JUST HOW AWESOME FOXBAT IS!

DON'T DELAY! ACT TODAY!

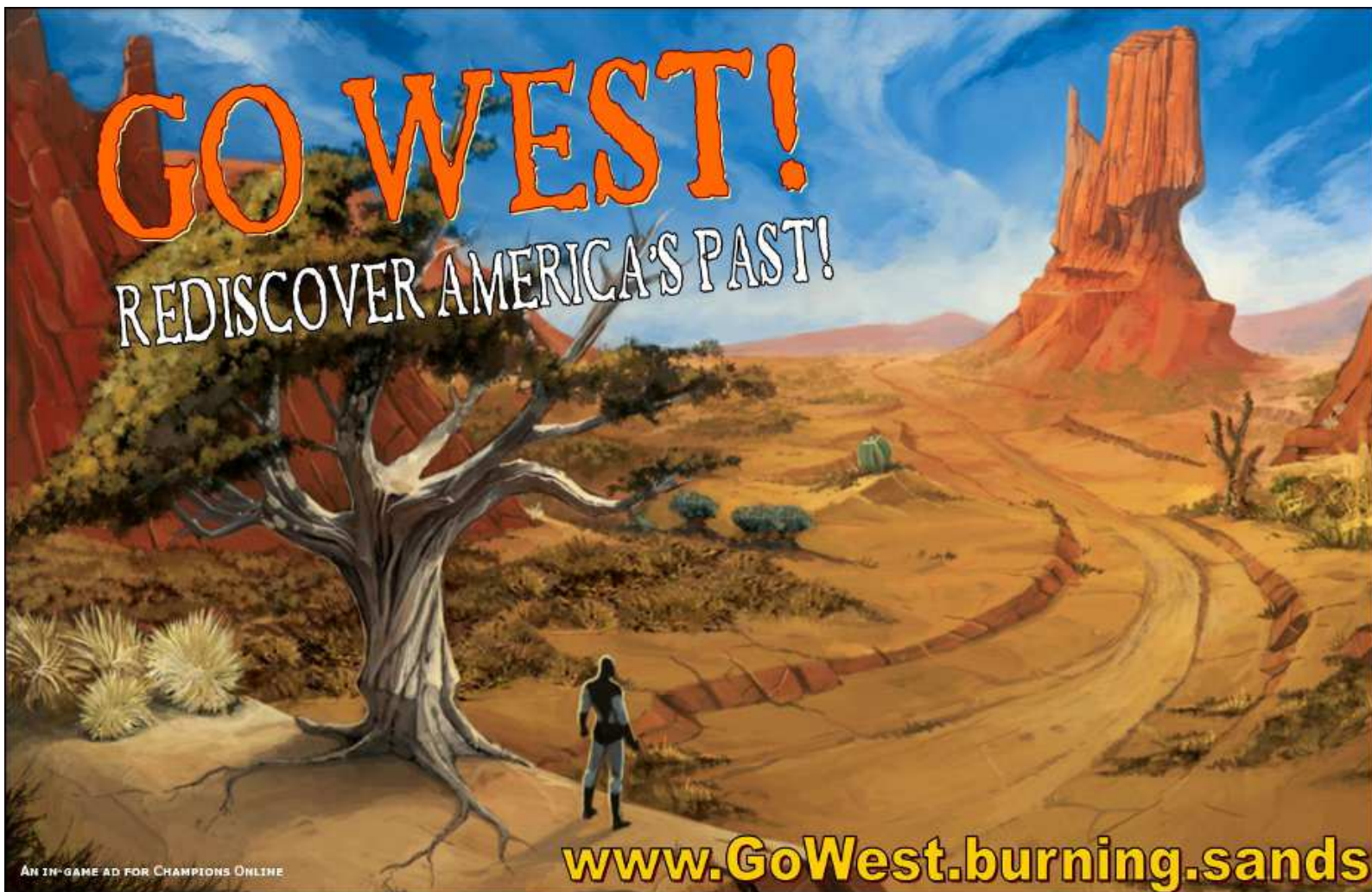
GIVE FOXBAT HIS OWN COMIC SERIES!



PAID FOR BY FUNDS "ACQUIRED" BY THE FOXBAT FANBASE OF MILLENNIUM CITY!

GO WEST!

REDISCOVER AMERICA'S PAST!



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

"MALIZIA'S WRATH"

- A CHAMPIONS ONLINE STORY BY DAVID 2

ONCE UPON A TIME, CANDACE SINCLAIR WAS A SUCCESSFUL AND AMBITIOUS ATTORNEY.

THEN SHE SUDDENLY DEVELOPED TELEPATHIC POWERS.

SEEKING TO SUPPRESS THIS NEW ABILITY, SHE CREATED A SPLIT PERSONALITY CALLED "PSYCHE", BASED OFF THE MEMORIES A HERO FROM HER BEST FRIEND'S PREVIOUS UNIVERSE.

THEN THAT PERSONALITY SPLIT AGAIN, THIS TIME BECOMING PSYCHE'S EVIL COUNTERPART, "MALIZIA". MALIZIA THEN TOOK COMPLETE CONTROL OF CANDACE'S BODY AND IS NOW OUT AND ABOUT ON THE STREETS OF MILLENNIUM CITY, SEEKING TO "MOTHER" THE CITY INTO ORDER.

UNABLE TO STOP MALIZIA, GALATEA FUTURE TURNED TO AGENT WEDNESDAY OF THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION TO HELP FIND OUT HOW THIS SPLIT PERSONALITY CAME TO BE AND HOW SHE CAN BRING HER BEST FRIEND BACK.

MEANWHILE, MAJOR XAVIER CROSS AND THE REST OF THE PROJECT MYCROFT TEAM ARE BUSY FINDING OUT HOW CANDACE AND MANY OTHER PEOPLE IN THE CITY SUDDENLY BECAME TELEPATHS.

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I DON'T KNOW
WHERE I AM...

AM I AWAKE
OR ASLEEP?

WHAT
HAPPENED
TO ME?

SHHH...
IT'S OKAY
CANDACE.

WHO ARE YOU?
AND WHERE AM I?

YOU'RE SAFE,
MY DEAR.
MOTHER IS
WATCHING
OVER YOU.

MOM?

YES,
CANDACE.
MOTHER
IS HERE...

EVERYTHING IS
OKAY NOW.

JUST LEAVE
EVERYTHING
TO ME, CHILD.

PSYCHE? YOU
WERE SAYING
SOMETHING?

 **MALIZIA**
PSIONIC TYRANT



NOTHING FOR YOU TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT.

IF YOU SAY SO, PSYCHE.

MARKMAN GOLD
AGENT TO THE SUPER-LEGENDS



OF COURSE I DO...
"PSYCHE" IS ALWAYS RIGHT.
BESIDES, YOU HAVE THE MOST IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT IN YOUR LIFE TO WORRY ABOUT.



U.N.T.I.L. HQ

"WELL IT'S NICE OF YOU TO FINALLY CHECK IN."



I HEARD THINGS WERE A LITTLE "HOT" FOR YOU OUT WEST.

MAJOR XAVIER CROSS
PROJECT MYCROFT



TRAVELER'S LOFT

NOTHING I'M NOT USED TO...
BUT YOU WOULD BE SURPRISED WHAT YOU CAN GET USED TO.

I'LL DEBRIEF YOU ON THAT LATER. RIGHT NOW I THINK I CAN BE OF MORE HELP WITH YOUR CURRENT DILEMMA WITH THE RASH OF NEW TELEPATHS.

AIN'T THAT THE TRUTH.

RONIN OMEGA
COSMIC TRAVELER

ALWAYS COULD USE SOME FRESH EYES ON THIS CASE. I'VE LINKED YOUR TERMINAL IN WITH OUR PROJECT'S SERVER, SO YOU SHOULD SEE WHAT WE HAVE SO FAR.

RIGHT... OPENING THE
CASE PACKAGE NOW...

HMM... A HUNDRED AND FORTY-
THREE PEOPLE IN THE CITY
SUDDENLY DEVELOPING
TELEPATHIC OR TELEKINETIC
POWERS OF VARYING DEGREES.

WAIT...THERE'S A FILE WITH
CANDACE SINCLAIR'S NAME ON
IT. IS SHE INVOLVED?

WE BELIEVE SHE WAS
ONE OF THE FIRST
PEOPLE AFFECTED.
SHE'S OPERATING
EITHER AS "PSYCHE"
OR AS "MALIZIA".

I HAVE STARLETT
OUT LOOKING
FOR EITHER OF
THEM RIGHT NOW.

DOES GALATEA
KNOW ABOUT
THIS?

I WAS THE ONE
THAT HAD TO
BREAK THE NEWS
TO HER.*

(* ISSUE #10)

RIGHT NOW WE NEED TO FOCUS
ON HOW ALL OF THESE PEOPLE
GOT TELEPATHIC POWERS.

ACCORDING TO OUR
RESEARCH, THESE ARE PEOPLE
THAT NEVER POSSESSED ANY
KIND OF PSI-POTENTIAL,
NEVER MIND ACTUAL ABILITY.

I TAKE IT YOU RULED
OUT DIMENSIONAL
SHIFTING OR ALIEN
MASTERMINDS?

I CHECKED WITH THE OTHER
DEPARTMENTS IN U.N.T.I.L.*
AND THEY RULED OUT THOSE
TWO POSSIBLE CAUSES.

WE'VE ALSO RULED OUT
AIRBORNE AND WATER
CONTAMINATION.

COUGH
COUGH

(* U.N.T.I.L. - UNITED NATIONS
TRIBUNAL ON INTERNATIONAL
LAW, THE SUPREME AUTHORITY
FOR SUPERHUMAN MATTERS IN
THE WORLD OF THE CHAMPIONS.)


*COUGH-
COUGH-
COUGH*
HAAAACK

RONIN?
ARE YOU
OKAY?

SORRY. PITFALLS
OF RECOVERING
FROM RADIATION
SICKNESS.

AS LONG AS
YOU'RE PAST THE
WORST OF IT.


WE'RE TRYING TO FIND
A COMMON ELEMENT
BETWEEN ALL OF THE
PEOPLE, BUT SO FAR
WE'VE BEEN COMING
UP EMPTY.



REALLY? Hmm...
ALL ADULTS WITH A
WIDE AGE RANGE.
VARYING
PROFESSIONS...
WAIT...

THERE **IS** ONE
COMMON ELEMENT
AMONG THEM ALL.
I'M SURPRISED
YOU DIDN'T SPOT
IT ALREADY.

YOU FOUND
SOMETHING?




OUT WITH
IT, MAN!
WHAT DID
YOU FIND?

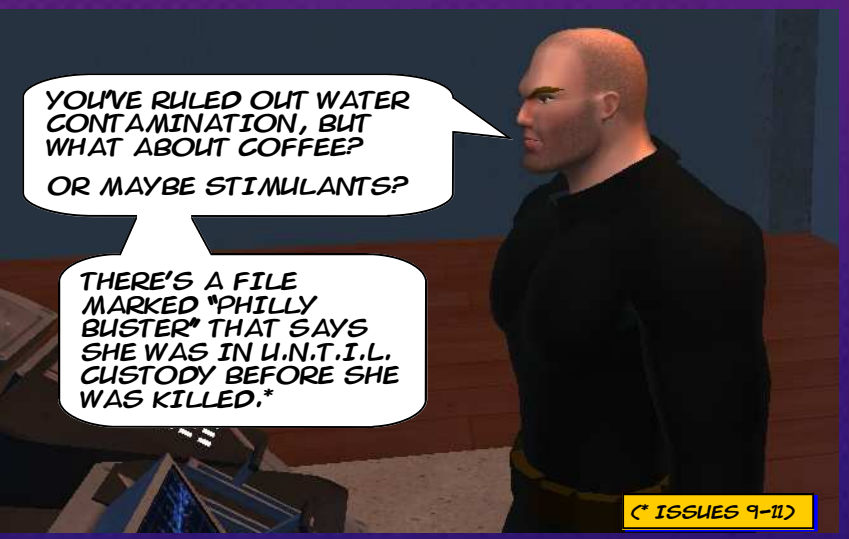


STUDENTS, BARTENDERS,
ACTORS, LAWYERS,
PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS,
EVEN MERCENARIES...

THEY ALL ENGAGE
IN ACTIVITIES
THAT DEMAND THEY
SPEND LONG
HOURS AWAKE.



OKAY, SO HOW...
WAIT, I SEE WHERE
YOU'RE GOING
WITH THIS.



YOU'VE RULED OUT WATER
CONTAMINATION, BUT
WHAT ABOUT COFFEE?
OR MAYBE STIMULANTS?

THERE'S A FILE
MARKED "PHILLY
BUSTER" THAT SAYS
SHE WAS IN U.N.T.I.L.
CUSTODY BEFORE SHE
WAS KILLED.*

(* ISSUES 9-11)



DO YOU STILL
HAVE HER
PERSONAL
BELONGINGS?

I NEED AN AGENT OVER TO EMILY
STREETER'S APARTMENT, **ASAP!**
INVENTORY EVERYTHING!
AND I WANT THE LIST OF HER
BELONGINGS FROM HER ARREST
BROUGHT UP HERE RIGHT NOW!

RONIN OMEGA IS
ON TO SOMETHING
THAT COULD BREAK
THIS WHOLE THING
WIDE OPEN!

SOMEWHERE IN MILLENNIUM CITY...



TELEPORTATION
COMPLETE.

WELCOME BACK,
AGENT SIDESTEP.



I ALMOST DID NOT
WANT TO COME BACK,
PROPHET.

ESPECIALLY AFTER I
FOUND OUT WHO IT
WAS THAT ATTACKED
ME.*



AGENT SIDESTEP
MULTIVERSE OPERATIVE

(* ISSUE #10)



CIVILIAN
MODE.



TRANSITION
COMPLETE.



IT WAS A MISTAKE
FOR ME TO TRY TO
EXPLORE FEELINGS
WITH THE NATIVE
INHABITANTS.

WHAT WAS I
EVEN THINKING?

AS THE NATIVE
INHABITANTS
SAY, YOU ARE
ONLY HUMAN.



BUT I AM NOT
HUMAN.
NOT IN THE WAY
THEY DEFINE IT
HERE.

THERE WOULD BE
SOME THAT WOULD
DISAGREE.





I AM NOT IN THE MOOD TO DEBATE YOU ON THE SUBJECT.

THAT IS YOUR PREROGATIVE.

I MUST COMPLIMENT YOU ON THE COMPLETION OF OUR BASE OF OPERATIONS.

UNIT SEVENTEEN WAS HELPFUL IN THE INSTALLATION OF THE COMPONENTS.

AND THE DIMENSIONAL HARMONICS WILL MASK OUR PORTALS FROM NATIVE DETECTION?

THAT IS CORRECT.



THAT IS GOOD.

THE LAST THING WE NEED IS TO HAVE MAJOR CROSS OR EVEN U.N.T.I.L.'S PROJECT CITADEL TRACE OUR PORTALS HERE.*

I AM WELL AWARE OF THE DANGERS OF THE NATIVE AUTHORITY DISCOVERING OUR OPERATIONS.

(* PROJECT CITADEL IS U.N.T.I.L.'S DEPARTMENT THAT INVESTIGATES OTHER DIMENSIONS. THEY ARE HIGHLY XENOPHOBIC.)



GOOD.

BOTH OF US MUST FOCUS ON OUR PRIMARY ASSIGNMENT.

SPEAKING OF...

WHERE IS GALATEA FUTURE RIGHT NOW?

ENGAGING SEARCH OF GALATEA FUTURE'S QUANTUM SIGNATURE.

THE PENTHOUSE OF ATHENA ROSE FAIRMORE (A.K.A. GALATEA FUTURE)

RING-RING

"HOLD ON... IT'S MY PUBLISHER."

"NOT A PROBLEM."

HELLOOO?
OH, HELLO
MRS. CARLISLE.



GALATEA FUTURE
OTHERWORLD GUARDIAN

EXCUSE
ME?

NO, I HAVEN'T
SEEN OR HEARD
FROM CANDACE
LATELY. WHY?

OH, A LEGAL
MATTER...
NO, I
UNDERSTAND.

OH, OF COURSE, IF I HAPPEN
TO SEE HER I'LL BE SURE TO
HAVE HER CALL YOU A.S.A.P.!

OH, AND HOW GO THE TALKS
WITH INCARNATE?

OH... THAT'S WHY YOU NEED
TO SPEAK WITH HER. OKAY.
NOT A PROB.

ALRIGHT... IF I SEE HER I'LL
HAVE HER CALL YOU, 'KAY?
BYE.

IT'S AMAZING
WATCHING YOU
WORK LIKE THAT.

I MEAN, EVEN FROM A PASSIVE
SCAN, IT WAS LIKE A LIGHT
SWITCH WAS FLIPPED WHEN
YOU WENT FROM YOURSELF TO
ATHENA FAIRMORE.

YOUR DIALOGUE, YOUR
MANNERISMS...

EVEN YOUR VOICE WENT
UP A SLIGHT OCTAVE.

IF I DIDN'T KNOW WHO
YOU WERE, I NEVER WOULD
HAVE THOUGHT THE TWO
OF YOU WERE THE SAME
PERSON.



AGENT WEDNESDAY
FBI TELEPATH



THAT'S THE TRICK OF
HAVING A SECRET
IDENTITY.

YOU ALMOST HAVE
TO BECOME ANOTHER
PERSON.

I HAD ONE BEFORE,
BUT IT SEEMED LIKE
A LONG TIME AGO.*

(* WAY BACK WHEN SHE WAS
GALATEA POWERS IN
"GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN
SPOTLIGHT" #1, AVAILABLE AT
BATTLEROCK COMICS)



FORGIVE ME FOR
PRYING, BUT HOW
DOES THAT DIFFER
FROM CANDACE'S
SPLIT PERSONALITY
PROBLEM?

AREN'T YOU WORRIED
THAT YOU ALSO
MIGHT LOSE CONTROL
OF WHO YOU ARE?



I WON'T DENY THAT I'VE
WONDERED ABOUT THAT
MYSELF HERE AND THERE.

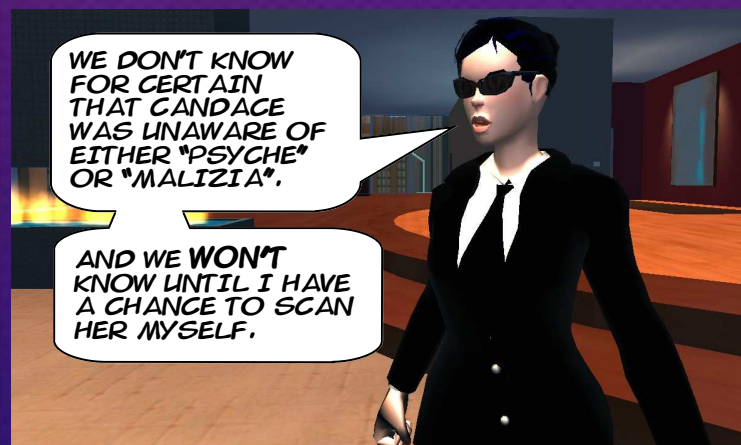
BUT FOR ME, IT'S A
MATTER OF BALANCE.

BEING ATHENA FAIRMORE
GIVES ME A CHANCE TO BE
WHO I AM WHEN I'M NOT
BEING GALATEA FUTURE.

BEING ATHENA ALLOWS ME TO
BE EXPRESSIVE, CREATIVE...TO
SHARE MY LOVE OF WRITING
WITH OTHERS.

AND ALSO TO GET OUT AND
BE WITH PEOPLE WITHOUT
BEING INUNDATED BY
STRANGE REQUESTS.

AND I SHOULD MENTION
THAT I **CHOOSE** THIS
IDENTITY. IT DIDN'T
JUST MANIFEST FROM
MY SUBCONSCIOUS LIKE
IT DID WITH CANDACE.



WE DON'T KNOW
FOR CERTAIN
THAT CANDACE
WAS UNAWARE OF
EITHER "PSYCHE"
OR "MALIZIA".

AND WE **WON'T**
KNOW UNTIL I HAVE
A CHANCE TO SCAN
HER MYSELF.



YOU PROMISED ME
YOU WOULD GIVE
HER A FAIR SHAKE,
AND I'M GOING TO
HOLD YOU TO TH--

BEEP
PRIORITY
COMMUNICATION



HOLD ON
TO THAT
THOUGHT...

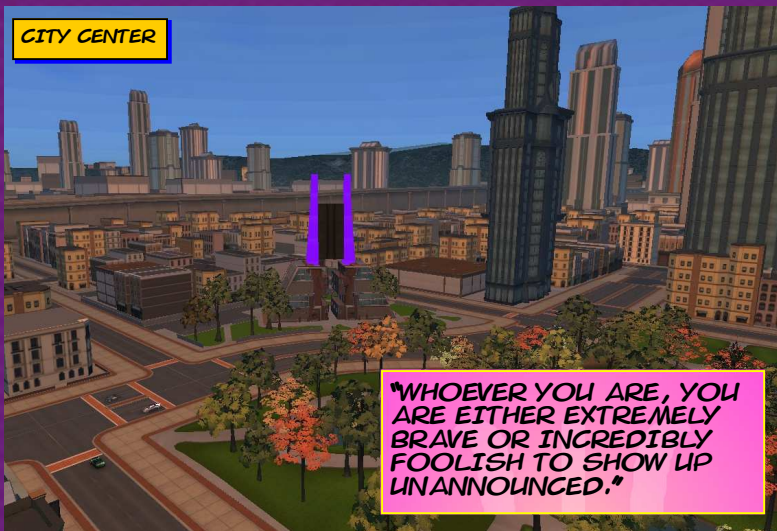
THIS IS
GALATEA
FUTURE,
RESPONDING
TO PAGE.

GALATEA, THIS IS
U.N.T.I.L. CONTROL.

WE JUST GOT A
COMMUNICATION FROM
SOMEONE WHO SAYS HE
DESPERATELY NEEDS TO
SPEAK WITH YOU.

AND WE HAVE A HARD TIME
BELIEVING WHO IT IS.

CITY CENTER



"WHOEVER YOU ARE, YOU ARE EITHER EXTREMELY BRAVE OR INCREDIBLY FOOLISH TO SHOW UP UNANNOUNCED."

HEADQUARTERS OF "THE MIND, INC."



"WHAT I AM, MISSUS POE, IS DETERMINED."

OR SHOULD I ADDRESS YOU AS MEDUSA?



YOUR VOICE...

SO...YOU ARE THE RECLUSIVE MISTER VAN CLEEF.

WHAT BRINGS YOU OUT OF THE SHADOWS?



MADELINE POE (A.K.A. MEDUSA)
TELEPATHIC LEADER - THE MIND, INC

THE JOINT PROGRAM BETWEEN YOUR GROUP AND VARTECH.

I THINK OUR LITTLE PSI-RABBIT HAS FALLEN TOO FAR DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE.

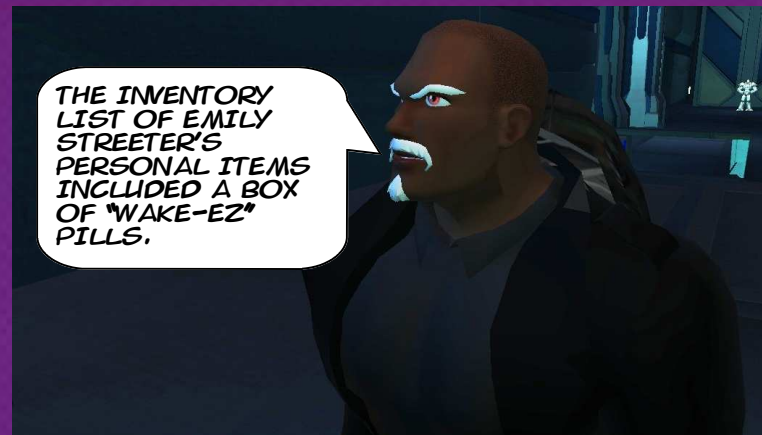


CURIOUS...I CANNOT READ YOUR MIND TO TELL IF YOU ARE SINCERE.

VERY WELL. LET'S ADJOURN TO MY OFFICE TO...TALK.



I THINK YOU FOUND OUR CONNECTION, RONIN.



THE INVENTORY LIST OF EMILY STREETER'S PERSONAL ITEMS INCLUDED A BOX OF "WAKE-EZ" PILLS.



STIMULANTS, RIGHT?

I TAKE IT THESE WERE NOT APPROVED BY THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION.

WHICH U.N.T.I.L. DEPARTMENT IS HANDLING THE OTHER SUDDEN TELEPATHS?

GOOD GUESS. NO, SOMEHOW THEY MANAGED TO SKIRT AROUND THE REGULATORS.

HOLD ON... FIELD AGENTS SAY THEY JUST FOUND TEN MORE BOXES IN THE APARTMENT SHE RENTED.

THAT WOULD BE PROJECT MIND GAME. HOLD ON...



TURLOUGH! GET IN TOUCH WITH LIEUTENANT FLOYD WITH PROJECT MIND GAME. HAVE HIM ASK THE PATIENTS THERE IF ANY OF THEM ARE TAKING WAKE-EZ!

COME TO THINK OF IT, I SEEM TO RECALL THAT WILLIE SOVAIN WAS A PITCHMAN FOR WAKE-EZ.

SO THERE'S YOUR COMMON ELEMENT. NEXT STEP IS TO FOCUS ON THE PRODUCT.



RIGHT, BECAUSE WE HAVE A CRACK TEAM OF SCIENTISTS THAT CAN GET US THAT INFORMATION AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE LIKE YOU SEE ON THOSE TV SHOWS.

SARCASM DOESN'T SUIT YOU, MAJOR.

WHAT DOES YOUR DATABASE TELL YOU ABOUT THE DRUG AND WHO MAKES IT?



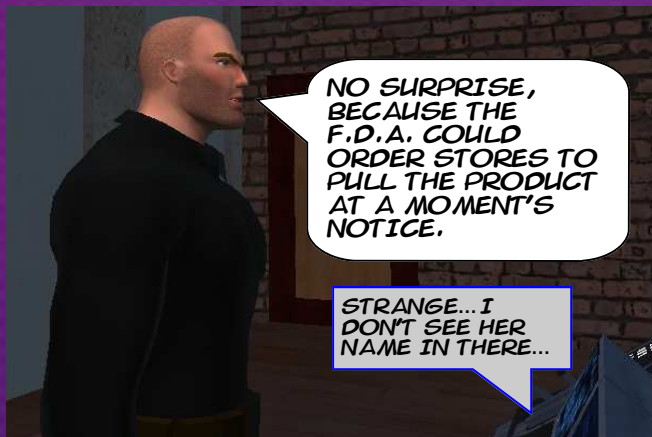
CHECKING IT NOW...

WAKE-EZ IS DISTRIBUTED BY A COMPANY CALLED HET DIMN, INCORPORATED.

IT LOOKS LIKE A SHELL COMPANY, THOUGH. NO LISTING AS TO WHO MANUFACTURES THE DRUG OR WHERE IT'S MADE.

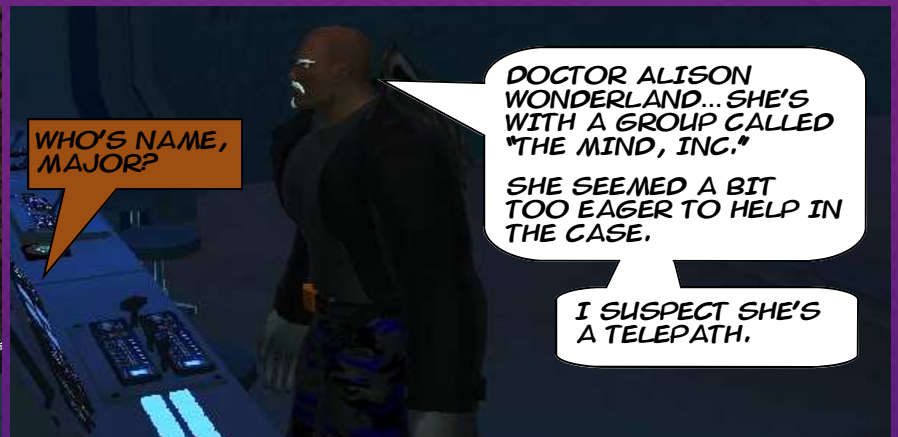
I'M SEEING RED FLAG PINGS FROM THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE, THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION, THE EUROPEAN UNION...

EVERYONE EXCEPT THE F.D.A.



NO SURPRISE, BECAUSE THE F.D.A. COULD ORDER STORES TO PULL THE PRODUCT AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE.

STRANGE... I DON'T SEE HER NAME IN THERE...



WHO'S NAME, MAJOR?

DOCTOR ALISON WONDERLAND... SHE'S WITH A GROUP CALLED "THE MIND, INC."

SHE SEEMED A BIT TOO EAGER TO HELP IN THE CASE.

I SUSPECT SHE'S A TELEPATH.



WHY DO YOU SAY THAT? AND WHAT IS "THE MIND, INC"?

SHE APPROACHED ME JUST OUTSIDE OF HQ A FEW MINUTES BEFORE YOU CALLED.* THE GROUP SHE WORKS WITH IS A TELEPATH SUPPORT GROUP.

LET ME GUESS: YOU HAVE PSIONIC JAMMING DEVICES INSIDE THE BUILDING?

(* LAST ISSUE)



OF COURSE. WHICH WAS PROBABLY WHY SHE WAS WAITING FOR ME TO SHOW UP.

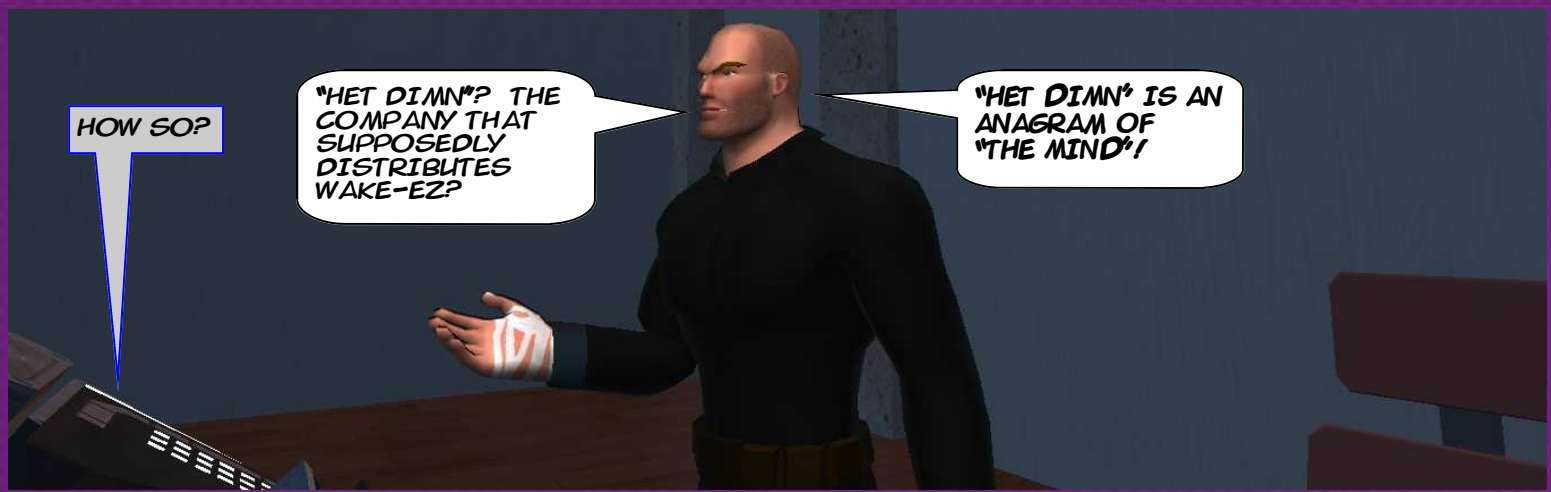


THEN I'M GUESSING THAT WONDERLAND IS YOUR "B-THREE".*

HER LITTLE VISIT WAS TO SEE FOR HERSELF HOW MUCH YOU KNEW.

AND IT MAKES SENSE WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT.

(* "BIG BAD BOSS")



HOW SO?

"HET DIMN"? THE COMPANY THAT SUPPOSEDLY DISTRIBUTES WAKE-EZ?

"HET DIMN" IS AN ANAGRAM OF "THE MIND"!



SONOFA...

IT WAS OUT THERE IN PLAIN SIGHT.

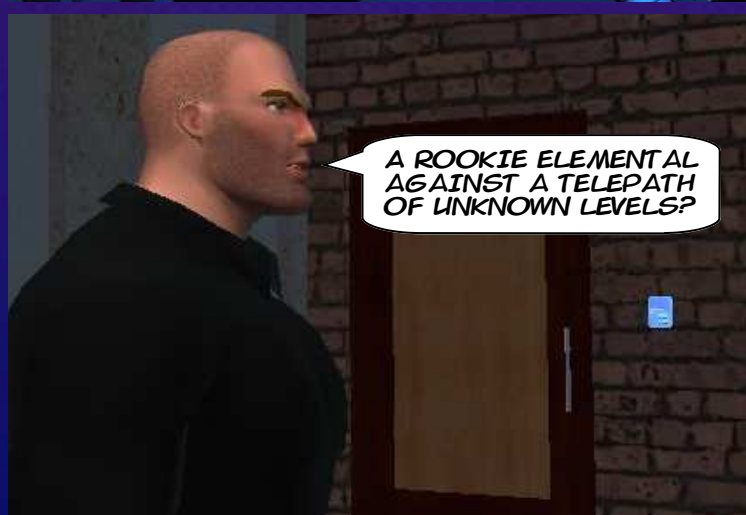
OF COURSE THIS IS JUST YOU AND ME TALKING.
WE BOTH KNOW YOU NEED SOMETHING A LITTLE MORE SOLID IF YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST DR. WONDERLAND AND THE MIND.
YOU KNOW... PROOF, EVIDENCE, THAT STUFF.



I'M WELL AWARE OF WHAT WE NEED, RONIN.

AND IT'S HIGH TIME THAT PROJECT MYCROFT PAYS THE GOOD DOCTOR A VISIT.
IF WE'RE LUCKY, WE CAN EVEN GET HER TO DO ALL THE HARD WORK FOR US.

I NEED ELITE ICE PAGED AND READY TO GO.



A ROOKIE ELEMENTAL AGAINST A TELEPATH OF UNKNOWN LEVELS?



WHICH IS WHY SHE'S NOT GOING TO WONDERLAND ALONE.
WE HAPPEN TO HAVE SOMEONE THAT WILL LET US FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE.

MEANWHILE, DOWNTOWN...



YOU HAVE **GOT**
TO BE KIDDING
ME!



WHOEVER YOU ARE,
YOU BETTER START
TALKING REALLY
FAST.



THUD!

NA-NA-NA-NA-
NA-NA-NA-NA-
I'M-
FOXBAAAAAT!!!



FOXBAT(?)
GREATEST SUPERVILLAIN EVER!

YOU'RE NOT FOXBAT.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING
ABOUT? I HAVE THE
COSTUME, I HAVE THE
SONG, AND I'M EVEN
DANCING THE FOXBATUSI!



I'VE MET THE REAL FOXBAT.
TWICE, IN FACT.

HE DOESN'T DANCE IN THE
MIDDLE OF THE STREET
LIKE YOU SEEM TO HAVE
BEEN FOR A WHILE.

OKAY, YOU GOT ME. I'M JUST
AN ACTOR THAT WAS HIRED
FOR THE FOXBATCON*.

THE REAL FOXBAT SAID I HAD
TO STAND HERE AND DANCE
TO GET YOUR ATTENTION AND
THEN DELIVER A MESSAGE.

AND YOU'RE STILL
DANCING BECAUSE..?

BECAUSE HE TOLD ME THAT
THE PING-PONG BALLS ON
MY BELT ARE MADE OF
NITROGLYCERIN, AND IF I
STAND STILL EVEN FOR
SECOND THEY WILL EXPLODE.



* WHAT? YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT
THE FOXBATCON? FOR SHAME!

HEAD ON OVER TO BATTLEROCK
COMICS FOR GALATEA'S RED
CARPET INTERVIEW. >



NITROGLYCERINE... RIGHT.

TELL YOU WHAT: HOW ABOUT YOU TELL ME THE MESSAGE SO I CAN DEACTIVATE THE BELT AND THEN YOU CAN SIT DOWN FOR A WHILE?

OR BETTER YET...

I PRESUME THAT FOXBAT IS NEARBY SOMEWHERE, GIVING YOU INSTRUCTIONS THROUGH THE EARPiece UNDER YOUR MASK.

HOW ABOUT HE TELL YOU SO I CAN LISTEN IN?




HOW ABOUT IT, FOX?

YOU WANT TO SEE HOW WELL I CAN USE MY HYPER-SENSES TO FIND THE REAL YOU?

I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T KNOW THAT--

"OH BE QUIET SO SHE CAN HEAR ME!"

"APOLOGIES FOR US MEETING LIKE THIS, GALATEA."



"I WAS ON MY WAY TO FILE A GRIEVANCE WITH THE GUILD OF CRIMINAL INTENTIONS, ONLY TO FIND THAT MY CLAIM WAS RENDERED MOOT."

AND WHY SHOULD THAT CONCERN ME?

"BECAUSE THE DIRTY-ROTTEN THIEF IN QUESTION IS MALIZIA, AND WORD ON THE STREET IS THAT YOU AND YOUR LITTLE U.N. SCOUT TROOP HAVE BEEN BUSY LOOKING FOR HER."

"**I* JUST HAPPEN TO KNOW WHAT HER PLAN IS."



"MALIZIA IS PLANNING ON TAKING OVER THE WCOG BUILDING."

"KNOWING THAT SHE'S A TELEPATH, YOU CAN IMAGINE WHAT SHE CAN DO WITH A FEW MILLION SEMI-ATTENTIVE VIEWERS."

AND HOW DO YOU HAPPEN TO KNOW ALL THIS?



"WELL IT JUST HAPPENED TO BE ONE OF THE THINGS ON MY OWN 'TO-DO' LIST FOR THE WEEK."

"BUT ALSO BECAUSE SOME OF MY LOYAL FANS THAT I BELIEVED WERE CONVERTED BY MALIZIA SUDDENLY CAME TO THEIR SENSES, AND CLUED ME IN TO HER INTENTIONS. IT SEEMS SHE'S NOT AS POWERFUL AS SHE BOASTED."

"MY FANS DID SAY THAT SHE HAD TO TAKE A QUICK DETOUR TO SOME OFFICE BUILDING TO PICK UP AN AGENT."



SORRY... *HUFF* BUT MY FEET ARE REALLY STARTING TO HURT.

THAT'S OKAY. FOXBAT TOLD ME ALL I NEEDED TO HEAR.

AS FOR YOU...THERE'S A POLICE STATION JUST DOWN THE HILL. GO DOWN THERE AND TURN YOURSELF IN AND TELL THEM EVERYTHING.



BUT THE BELT--

IF IT REALLY HAD NITROGLYCERINE PING-PONG BALLS, THEN THEY WOULD HAVE EXPLODED THE MINUTE YOU STARTED DANCING AROUND.

ALL THOSE PING-PONG BALLS HAVE INSIDE OF THEM ARE MOTHBALLS.



CANDACE...

STUPID LITTLE... THAT'S THE LAST TIME I TAKE A JOB FOR SAUL!

I REALLY HOPE YOU'RE NOT PLANNING ON DOING WHAT I THINK YOU'RE DOING.

MEANWHILE...NOT FAR FROM THE OFFICES OF "THE MIND, INC"...

WHAT?!?!/

NO, NO, THAT'S JUST NOT POSSIBLE!

THERE IS NO WAY THAT THE F.D.A. COULD JUST ISSUE A RECALL OF WAKE-EZ!

NO! I AM TELLING YOU THAT THEY CANNOT DO THAT!



DR. ALISON WONDERLAND
THE MIND, INC.

I SPENT SIX WEEKS IN WASHINGTON AND LANSING EITHER BUYING, SEDUCING, OR CONDITIONING EVERY REGULATOR THAT COULD DO THAT!

THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO CHANCE IN HELL THAT ANYONE IN THAT BUREAUCRATIC CESSPOOL COULD SUDDENLY DEVELOP THE OVARIES TO ISSUE AN EMERGENCY RECALL OF THE PRODUCT OFF STORE SHELVES!

NO...NO...YOU LISTEN TO ME!

YOU FIND OUT WHO ISSUED THAT ORDER, AND THEN YOU CALL ME BACK SO I CAN THEN PERSONALLY MIND-WIPE THEM TO THE LEVEL OF AN INFANT!

AHEM

DOCTOR WONDERLAND... YOU SHOULD HANG UP RIGHT NOW.

I'LL... GET BACK WITH YOU LATER. JUST DO WHAT I TOLD YOU TO DO.



I'M AGENT WEDNESDAY WITH THE F.B.I., AND THIS IS AGENT DEL GELO WITH U.N.T.I.L.
WE NEED TO TALK WITH YOU ABOUT YOUR WORK WITH "WAKE-EZ".

WE PROBABLY SHOULD ALSO ASK ABOUT THAT CONVERSATION THAT WE COULDN'T HELP BUT OVERHEAR.

CYNTHIA REGINA DEL GELO
AKA: ELITE ICE



IT WAS A PRIVATE CONVERSATION; ONE THAT I'M NOT PRIVY TO SHARE WITH YOU WITHOUT A WARRANT



FUNNY, BECAUSE THE SUPREME COURT SAYS THAT IF IT'S LOUD ENOUGH FOR US TO HEAR, THEN WE DON'T NEED A WARRANT.



AND WE HAVE HEARD ENOUGH RIGHT NOW TO AT LEAST BRING YOU IN FOR QUESTIONING ON BRIBERY AND RACKETEERING.
YOU WANT TO CALL YOUR LAWYER TO MEET US AT U.N.T.I.L. HQ?

YOU THINK I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING, DON'T YOU?

I CAN FEEL YOUR PASSIVE SCANS JUST LIKE YOU CAN FEEL MINE.

I CAN'T READ YOUR ASSOCIATE, BUT I KNOW FROM YOU THAT YOU'RE ALREADY CONVINCED YOU HAVE ME DEAD TO RIGHTS.



BUT I'M NOT READY TO END THIS TEA PARTY!



BACK AT WCOC STUDIOS...

...WELL THEN I TOLD JULIE "I GUESS YOU KNOW THAT I'M FOXBAT."

YOU DIDN'T!

YEAH...WELL SHE KNEW I WAS MAKING IT UP... SHE KNOWS I WOULD NEVER LOSE THE 'STACHE. IT'S JUST WHO I AM.
BUT THEN SHE GOT THAT FUNNY LOOK...

...YOU KNOW, THAT LOOK LIKE SHE'S GOT A THOUGHT THAT--

AHEM
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN...

MY NAME IS MARKMAN GOLD... AND MY ASSOCIATE WOULD LIKE YOUR ATTENTION.

MISTER GOLD HAS A VERY IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAKE...

... AND YOU ALL HAVE BEEN RECRUITED TO HELP MAKE SURE EVERYONE KNOWS ABOUT IT!



OVER HERE,
DOC!




COME ON!
HURRY!



WHO ARE
YOU?



A FRIEND.
OUR MUTUAL
BENEFACTOR SENT
ME TO HELP YOU.

 **KEIRA FYRE**
ELEMENTAL ARCHER



A... FRIEND?
YOU'LL FORGIVE
ME IF I DON'T
TRUST SOMEONE I
CAN'T SCAN RIGHT
NOW.




LISTEN, IT'S NO SKIN OFF
MY TEETH IF YOU GET
CAPTURED BY THE FEDS.

I'M GETTING PAID TO HELP
GET YOU OUT, BUT IF YOU
DON'T WANT MY HELP, FINE.
JUST KEEP RUNNING.


BUT I HAPPEN TO KNOW
ONE OF THE TWO
CHASING YOU, AND I
KNOW THAT YOU'RE
BETTER OFF WITH ME
THAN WITH HER AND HER
FRIENDS.

OKAY!
OKAY... FINE.
JUST GET ME
OUT OF HERE!



SMART MOVE.
NOW... GET TO THE
OTHER END OF THE
ALLEYWAY AND KEEP
AN EYE OUT FOR THE
TRANSPORT.
I'LL KEEP AN EYE ON
THIS END IN CASE THE
FEDS CATCH UP.

O-O-KAY...



I HOPE THE TRANSPORT
ARRIVES SOON.
I HATE NOT KNOWING
WHAT'S HAPPENING.
IT'S JUST TOO...
PEDESTRIAN.

IN MY LINE OF
WORK, HAVING A
PSIONIC JAMMER
IS A NECESSITY.
BUT DON'T WORRY...



YOUR TROUBLES
WILL BE OVER
SOON ENOUGH.



WAIT...HOLD
UP...
SOMETHING'S
WRONG.

HOLD UP?
YOU CHEW ME OUT
FOR USING A HALF-
SECOND CHANGE
SPELL AND NOW YOU
WANT US TO STOP?

 **ELITE ICE**
ELEMENTAL MYSTIC



YOU REALLY NEED
TO WORK ON
YOUR COMM--

SSHH!
I WAS SENSING A
JAMMING DEVICE A
SECOND AGO...
IN THAT ALLEYWAY...



WE'RE TOO
LATE.



D@MNIT!



THAT DOESN'T
LOOK LIKE A
GUNSHOT
WOUND.

IT'S NOT...
THAT'S FROM A
WIND ARROW
SPELL.



SO YOU
KNOW WHO
DID THIS?

I THOUGHT
I DID.

INTERLUDE...

THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST...



NEAR A BASE THAT SHOULD NOT
EXIST...OR STILL BE ACTIVE...

Clang

Clang
Clang

Clang
Clang
Clang

JUSTICE...

Clang
Clang
Clang

END OF INTERLUDE.




Image by Yon Phillips

But it wouldn't hurt to put on some clothes too...

www.TheCapeRadio.com **Player-Run Online Radio**



We didn't make the oil...

But we did get it from the ground.

And then bring it to America.

And then refine it into the cleanest, most fuel-efficient form of gasoline on the market ever.

And then make that gasoline available for you when you need it at any one of our 24-hour service stations all across the country.

We didn't have to do all of that.

But we did it anyway.

Because we care.

Because that's what a good corporate business in America does.

ARGENT

MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE... FOR EVERYONE!



Argent is a fictional business in the MMO world of Champions Online. Any comparisons to filthy, greedy, money-grubbing, polluting, real-world private corporations that get tax breaks from corrupt politicians in Washington while screwing over the taxpayers and denying the consequences of their actions are just coincidental. It's fiction, okay?

Can You Read My Mind?

Are you able to know what other people do before they actually do it?

Do you think you're hearing voices but nobody is talking?

Do you think certain things and then others just automatically do it?

Can you make things move by just thinking about it?

You may not be going crazy!

You may actually be a telepath!

Every year, hundreds of people discover that they possess psionic abilities. But, all too often, they are dismissed as having a mental illness or accused of being con artists.

Or worse, many have been institutionalized and drugged against their will. Slaves of ignorance and hysteria.

We are here to help those with psionic talents. We will properly test to determine your psionic potential and then provide proven ways to positively utilize your talent.

Stop by our offices in Millennium City for your FREE evaluation and consultation!

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New York? Chicago? California? New England?

**No matter the style and no matter the toppings, we
promise three things about our pizza:**

It's gonna be hot.

It's gonna be fresh.

And it's gonna be GREAT!

Darren's Pizza

City Center, Millennium City

MEANWHILE... BACK IN
MILLENNIUM CITY...



"IT'S TIME FOR YOU
TO MAKE YOUR BIG
ANNOUNCEMENT."

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN...
MY NAME IS MARKMAN
GOLD.
I AM THE CEO OF THE
GOLD STANDARD AGENCY.

AND I AM **PROUD** TO
ANNOUNCE THAT THE GOLD
STANDARD AGENCY HAS
SECURED A **LIFETIME**
CONTRACT WITH THE
HEROINE STANDING
BESIDE ME.



FOR THOSE THAT DO NOT
RECOGNIZE HER...
THIS IS, IN FACT,
PSYCHE.


THE VERY HERO THAT YOU
HAVE HEARD ABOUT IN
THE NEWS RECENTLY.

NOT JUST THE SUBJECT OF
FICTION... **PSYCHE** IS A
VERY REAL HERO.

AND WE ARE HONORED...
TRULY AND DEEPLY
HONORED... TO HAVE HER
JOIN OUR FAMILY.








THIS LATEST IN HERO ACQUISITIONS IS THE CULMINATION OF A DREAM THAT I STARTED WAY BACK WHEN I WAS A YOUNG MAN IN INDIA.


I BELIEVED THEN THAT I COULD DO TO THE HERO COMMUNITY WHAT THE FILM AGENTS DID WITH THE ACTORS IN BOLLYWOOD.



AND NOW, WITH PSYCHE IN OUR GOLD STANDARD FAMILY, WE CAN ALSO REACH INTO THE AMERICAN ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY.

AS THE REAL-LIFE VERSION OF THE CHARACTER IN ATHENA FAIRMORE'S "SENTINELS OF LOVE" BOOK SERIES, PSYCHE IS LEGALLY ENTITLED TO BOOK AND FILM ROYALTIES.

ROYALTIES THAT MY ATTORNEYS WILL BE FILING SUIT TO COLLECT.



OF COURSE WE WOULD NOT WANT TO DISSUADE MISS FAIRMORE FROM CONTINUING TO USE OUR CLIENT'S NAME AND LIKENESS IN HER WORKS, ANY MORE THAN WE WOULD FOR ANY OTHER HERO IN OUR GOLD STANDARD FAMILY.

AFTER ALL, THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF WHAT WE DO IS THE MAXIMUM EXPLOITATION OF EVERY HERO FOR THE MAXIMUM ATTENTION AND THE MAXIMUM VALUE.

WHICH MEANS, OF COURSE, THE MAXIMUM MONEY FOR THE AGENCY... AND FOR ME.

THIS IS...THIS IS THE CULMINATION OF ALL THAT I HAVE EVER DONE.

IT IS TRULY THE HAPPIEST DAY OF MY LIFE.



AND NOW PSYCHE
HAS SOMETHING
THAT... THAT...
WHA... WHAT'S...?

YOU...



STARLETT...
GET GOLD OUT
OF HERE.
I'LL DEAL WITH
MALIZIA.



WHAT IS
HAPPENING?
WHO IS THIS
WOMAN?
WHY AM I
HERE?



YOU'VE BEEN
CONNED, GOLD.
AND NOW YOU'RE
BEING RESCUED.
JUST GO WITH
STARLETT AND
DON'T MAKE ME
TELL YOU AGAIN.



YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE
LET YOUR FRIEND
LEAVE.
SHE HAD THE ONE
THING ON HER THAT
WOULD HAVE MADE
THIS A FAIR FIGHT.

I WON'T NEED A PSIONIC
JAMMER, MALIZIA.
I HAVE THE ONLY WEAPON
I NEED TO STOP YOU.

I HAVE MY FRIEND,
CANDACE SINCLAIR.

WHOP



CANDACE SINCLAIR
IS DEAD!
SHE WAS TOO WEAK
TO SURVIVE THIS
CITY!

THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE
WRONG.

CANDACE SINCLAIR IS
MY BEST FRIEND, AND I
KNOW SHE'S ONE OF THE
STRONGEST WOMEN I
HAVE EVER MET.

TAYAP
IS THAT YOU
I HEAR?

STRONGEST?

LIAR!

***I* AM THE STRONGER ONE!**

I GAVE HER THE STRENGTH SHE NEEDED TO FIGHT OFF THE NATIONALIST!*

I AM THE ONE THAT GAVE HIM THE PUNISHMENT HE DESERVED!**

I AM EVEN ABLE TO DO WHAT YOU COULD NEVER DO... GET MARKMAN GOLD TO EMBARRASS HIMSELF IN FRONT OF LIVE TELEVISION!

(**ISSUE #7** ** **ISSUE #8**)

TAKE A LOOK AROUND, MALIZIA!!

DO YOU SEE ANYONE HERE TO HELP YOU BROADCAST?

NO CAMERA OPERATORS, NO PRODUCTION STAFF... YOU NEVER HAD CONTROL OF THEM. YOU'RE JUST NOT THAT POWERFUL.

THEY ALL WENT INTO HIDING AS SOON AS YOU SHOWED UP.

IT'S ALL PART OF THEIR "FOXBAT CONTINGENCY" PLAN.

FOXBAT KEEPS TAKING OVER THE STUDIO SO MANY TIMES THAT THEY'VE PREPARED FOR THIS.

THE STATION'S BEEN AIRING NOTHING BUT SITCOMS FOR THE PAST HOUR.

WHY THE HELL DID YOU PUT ME IN HERE?

I NEED TO CALL MY PEOPLE!

I NEED TO SPIN THIS THE RIGHT WAY!

I'M DOING YOU A FAVOR, GOLD.

IF IT WERE UP TO ME, YOU'D STILL BE OUT THERE AS MALIZIA'S LITTLE PEROXIDE MONKEY.

YOU LISTEN TO ME AND YOU LISTEN GOOD.

I OWN YOU, AND IF YOU DON'T WANT THE TRUTH TO COME OUT, YOU'LL DO--

SHUT UP!

YOU KNOW I'VE HAD JUST ENOUGH OF YOU!

I SAVED YOUR SORRY BUTT AND STOPPED YOU FROM INCRIMINATING YOURSELF IN FRONT OF TV CAMERAS, AND THIS IS THE THANKS THAT I GET?



YOU DON'T TELL
ME TO SHUT UP!
I'M MARKMAN
GOLD! I'M--



SLAM!



YOU'RE LUCKY I
HELD BACK MY KICK.
MAYBE WHEN YOU
WAKE UP YOU'LL BE
THANKFUL YOU'RE
STILL ALIVE.



NOW... ONE OF THESE
SHOULD CONNECT ME
TO THE STUDIO
CAMERAS.

AND THEN I CAN GET
MY OWN LITTLE
BLACKMAILING
MATERIAL TO COUNTER
WHAT YOU HAVE ON ME.



IF I CAN'T CONTROL
THIS WORLD, THEN
I'LL USE YOU TO
DESTROY IT!



UNF!
NO... YOU... WON'T.
CANDACE...
WON'T... LET YOU!



I WON'T... WHAT?


YAYAY
YAYAY WHERE
ARE YOU?



BE QUIET!

CANDACE
SINCLAIR
IS DEAD!
THIS IS MY
BODY NOW.
MY WORLD!

DEAD?
I'M... DEAD?



NO... SHE'S NOT DEAD.
YOU WOULDN'T BE ALIVE IF
SHE WAS DEAD.
YOU NEED HER... BECAUSE
SHE'S THE LINK TO MY
MIND... TO MY MEMORIES.
WITHOUT CANDACE... YOU'RE
NOTHING.


SHUT... UP!

YOU SEE... I KNOW
THE TRUTH.


THE LINK, IT WORKS
BOTH WAYS.

YOU THINK... YOU THINK THAT
KEEPING CANDACE ASLEEP...
THAT YOU'RE... KEEPING HER
SAFE.

BUT... BUT YOU'RE NOT.
SHE'S STILL IN THERE... AND
SHE NEEDS TO **WAKE UP!**



WHY? SO SHE CAN BE
DISBARRED AND TAINT
ALL OF HER VICTORIES?
SO YOU CAN GO BACK
TO BEING OWNED BY
MARKMAN GOLD OR
FORCED INTO EXILE
FOREVER?
SO SHE CAN LOSE ALL
OF HER FRIENDS LIKE
PSYCHE LOST HERS?



IS THAT WHAT
YOU'RE AFRAID OF?
THAT YOU'RE LIKE
PSYCHE?

CANDACE... MALIZIA
WAS NEVER REALLY
IN PSYCHE'S HEAD!

YOU'RE LYING!



I KNEW THE REAL
PEOPLE BEHIND
MY CHARACTERS.

"THIS WAS THE BIG
SECRET I WAS
GOING TO REVEAL
IN BOOK FIVE... THAT
PSYCHE WAS BEING
MANIPULATED, NOT
POSSESSED."

OH MY GOD...

GALATEA FUTURE
IS ATHENA ROSE
FAIRMORE!

I KNEW THE
REAL PSYCHE...
AND I KNOW
YOU, CANDACE.
AND I KNOW
THAT YOU'RE
STRONGER
THAN SHE EVER
COULD BE!

"YOU SURVIVED THE DESTRUCTION
OF DETROIT. YOU SURVIVED WHEN
EVERYONE GAVE UP ON YOU!"

"YOU FOUGHT FOR CASES
MOST PEOPLE THOUGHT
WERE UNWINNABLE."

TAYA...

"YOU'RE A SURVIVOR... AND A
FIGHTER, CANDACE!"

"NOW WAKE UP AND **FIGHT!**"



"DIRECTOR POE FROM THE MIND JUST SENT OVER ALL OF WONDERLAND'S DATA."

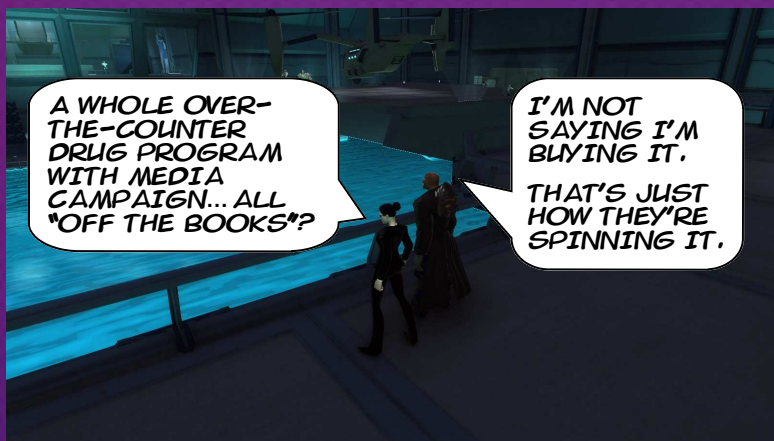


"THEY'RE SPINNING THIS TO BE SOME SORT OF ROGUE OPERATION."



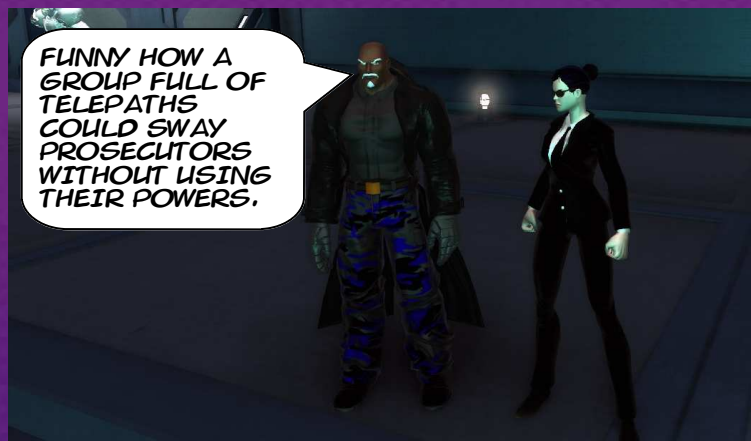
"ONE THAT JUST HAPPENED TO NET THEM THREE MILLION IN PROFITS."

A WHOLE OVER-THE-COUNTER DRUG PROGRAM WITH MEDIA CAMPAIGN... ALL "OFF THE BOOKS"?



I'M NOT SAYING I'M BUYING IT. THAT'S JUST HOW THEY'RE SPINNING IT.

FUNNY HOW A GROUP FULL OF TELEPATHS COULD SWAY PROSECUTORS WITHOUT USING THEIR POWERS.



IS THAT WHY YOU BROUGHT ME DOWN HERE?

TO IMPRESS ME WITH YOUR HANGER AND DOCK WHILE KNOCKING THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM?



QUITE THE CONTRARY.

I WANTED TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR WILLINGNESS TO WORK WITH MY PEOPLE ON THIS CASE.

WE'RE NOT AS POLISHED AS SOME OF THE OTHER U.N.T.I.L. DIVISIONS, BUT WE'RE JUST AS DETERMINED TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THINGS, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT INVOLVES ONE OF OUR OWN.

THAT BRINGS US TO THE MATTER OF CANDACE SINCLAIR.

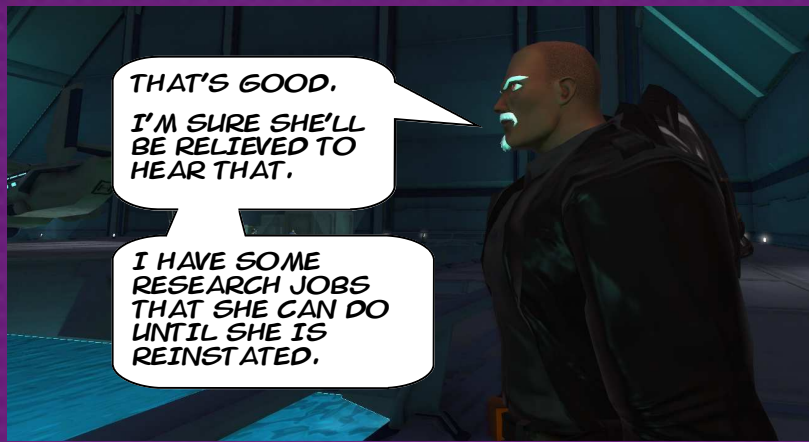


I SPOKE WITH A FRIEND OVER IN LANSING THAT IS ON THE MICHIGAN BAR THAT HANDLES THESE CASES.

AS FAR AS THEY ARE CONCERNED, MISS SINCLAIR WAS JUST ANOTHER ONE OF THE DOZENS OF LAWYERS THAT WERE UNKNOWINGLY AFFECTED BY THE DRUG.

AS LONG AS YOU CAN PROVE SHE NO LONGER HAS TELEPATHIC POWERS, SHE CAN SERVE A SIX MONTH SUSPENSION FROM LAW PRACTICE WITH THE OTHERS.

AND HER RECORD CAN BE EXPUNGED OF THE NOTATION IF SHE DOESN'T RELAPSE IN FIVE YEARS.



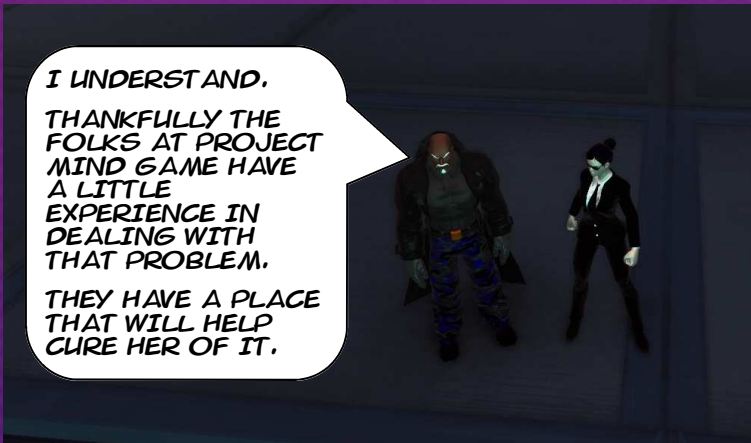
THAT'S GOOD.
I'M SURE SHE'LL
BE RELIEVED TO
HEAR THAT.

I HAVE SOME
RESEARCH JOBS
THAT SHE CAN DO
UNTIL SHE IS
REINSTATED.



I'D BE MORE
CONCERNED ABOUT THE
SPLIT PERSONALITY
SHE GOT WHEN SHE
DEVELOPED HER
POWERS.

RATNER-SINGER
SYNDROME CAN HAVE
LASTING EFFECTS ON A
PERSON'S MIND.



I UNDERSTAND.
THANKFULLY THE
FOLKS AT PROJECT
MIND GAME HAVE
A LITTLE
EXPERIENCE IN
DEALING WITH
THAT PROBLEM.
THEY HAVE A PLACE
THAT WILL HELP
CURE HER OF IT.



MERCY HOSPITAL - SECURE WING

"WE'RE GETTING
HER READY FOR
THE TRIP NOW."



YOU CAME
BACK.

I AM STILL
ASSIGNED TO
MONITOR
GALATEA FUTURE.
THAT JOB MUST
ALWAYS TAKE
PRECEDENCE.

REGARDLESS OF
MY... PERSONAL
FEELINGS.



I'M... I'M
SORRY
FOR--

YOU WERE NOT
YOURSELF.
I KNOW THIS
AND I
UNDERSTAND.



THE TELEPATHIC LINK THAT
YOU HAVE WITH GALATEA
FUTURE IS STILL THERE.
AS LONG AS IT REMAINS,
YOU RUN THE RISK OF
BRINGING BACK THE PSYCHE
-MALIZIA PERSONALITY.
ONLY YOU CAN SEVER THIS
LINK, AND IT MUST BE DONE
BEFORE YOU LOSE YOUR
POWERS COMPLETELY.

I WILL SHOW YOU HOW TO DO
THIS.

AS WELL AS TO GIVE HER
A GIFT THAT WILL
PREVENT FUTURE THREATS.



... OFFICIALS ARE STANDING BY THEIR EARLIER STATEMENTS REGARDING THE "WAKE-EZ" RECALL, FIXING THE BLAME SOLELY ON PROJECT LEADER ALISON WONDERLAND, WHO WAS KILLED WHILE TRYING TO FLEE ARREST.

JUST "KILLED"...

BE THANKFUL THEY DID NOT SAY HOW SHE MET HER DEMISE, OR ELSE YOU WOULD REGRET THE VERY MENTION.

MISTER VAN CLEEF!
HOW DID..?

VARTECH WOULD NOT HAVE CONTACTED YOU IF WE DID NOT DO OUR HOMEWORK ON YOU FIRST, MISS FYRE.

I WANTED TO SEE YOU PERSONALLY TO THANK YOU FOR THE WORK YOU DID IN DEALING WITH OUR LITTLE "PROBLEM".

AS WELL AS TO SEE FOR MYSELF THE BEAUTIFUL WORKSHOP YOU PUT TOGETHER BENEATH YOUR FAMILY'S DRUID SANCTUM.



THE CAVE CAME FROM MY GRANDMOTHER... AN EXTENSION OF HER MAGIC.

BUT IT SEEMS I HAVE YOU TO THANK FOR ALL OF THE MORE MODERN EQUIPMENT.



THINK OF IT AS AN INVESTMENT... FOR YOUR FUTURE ASSIGNMENTS WITH VARTECH.



IT'S JUST A PITY I WON'T BE ABLE TO USE IT TOO MUCH.

I CAN'T EXACTLY TAKE THIS ALL WITH ME WHEN I TRAVEL.

TRAVEL?

OH NO, MISS FYRE, YOUR DAYS OF LIVING IN A SUITCASE WHILE GOING FROM ASSIGNMENT TO ASSIGNMENT ARE OVER WITH.

YOUR NEW LONG-TERM AGREEMENT WITH VARTECH WILL REQUIRE YOU TO AGAIN CALL MILLENNIUM CITY YOUR HOME.




BUT... I'VE NEVER BEEN ONE TO STAND STILL.

I COME AND I GO, LIKE THE WIND. REMEMBER? THAT'S WHAT MAKES ME SO GOOD AT WHAT I DO!

YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO ADAPT, MY DEAR.

IN FACT, YOUR ASSIGNMENT WILL REQUIRE YOU TO REMAIN CLOSE FRIENDS WITH MISS DEL GELO... AND WITH THE REST OF PROJECT MYCROFT.

USE THEM TO GATHER AS MUCH INFORMATION AS YOU CAN ABOUT YOUR TARGET, SO WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO STRIKE WITHOUT FAIL.



YOU MAKE IT SOUND LIKE MY TARGET IS IMPOSSIBLE TO KILL.

NOT IMPOSSIBLE. BUT NOT EASY EITHER. IN ANOTHER TIME, IN ANOTHER WORLD, SHE WOULD TAKE ON GODS.

YOUR TARGET IS GALATEA FUTURE. THE SAME WOMAN THAT ONCE KILLED ME.



ALEXANDER VAN CLEEF
VARTECH



"SO THESE ARE IT, HUH?"



...THE INFAMOUS "HOT SLEEP" TUBES?

I STEP INSIDE THIS AND I GO TO SLEEP, AND I WAKE UP MONTHS LATER.

SANE AND COMPLETELY POWERS-FREE, RIGHT?

FROM WHAT I'VE READ, YES.

THE FOLKS AT PROJECT MIND GAME SAY THAT THESE TUBES WERE DESIGNED TO DEAL WITH ALL SORTS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS ASSOCIATED WITH LONG-TERM STAYS OFF-PLANET.

THEY SAY IT WILL WORK WITH RATNER-SINGER SYNDROME AS WELL AS LET YOU SLEEP OFF THE EFFECTS OF THE WAKE-EZ DRUGS.



I JUST NEED TO MAKE A FEW ADJUSTMENTS TO THE TUBE.



WOW...IT'S STARTING TO SINK IN.



WHAT IS?

I... AM ON... THE MOON!

I MEAN... YOU'VE BEEN TO OTHER WORLDS BEFORE, BUT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT I'VE EVER BEEN OFF MY HOME PLANET.

IT'S JUST... EYE-OPENING.



BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THAT'S WHAT I SAID THE FIRST TIME I WAS IN SPACE.
OKAY, WE'RE READY HERE.



WELL... THIS IS IT.

WAIT...



I JUST WANTED TO SAY... I'M SORRY FOR THE MESS I PUT US ALL IN.



IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT. YOU HAD NO IDEA WHAT WAS BEING DONE TO YOU, OR HOW TO HANDLE IT.



I KNOW... BUT THE LEAST I CAN DO IS THIS...



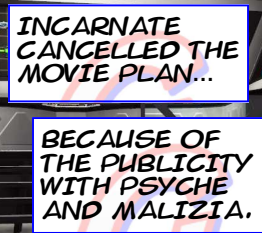
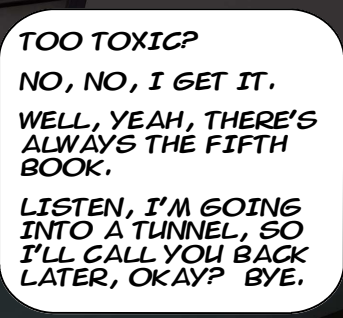
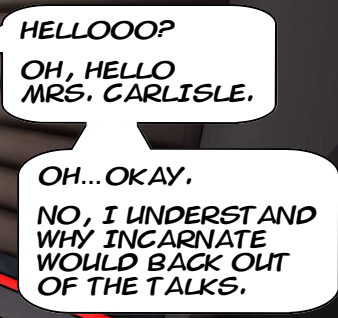
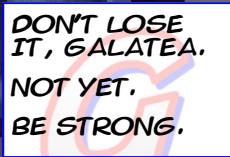
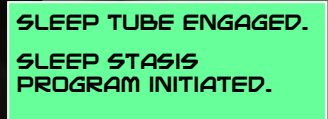
A GIFT FROM AGENT SIDESTEP.
A BLOCK FROM ALL FUTURE TELEPATHIC PROBES.
AND TO END OUR LINK.



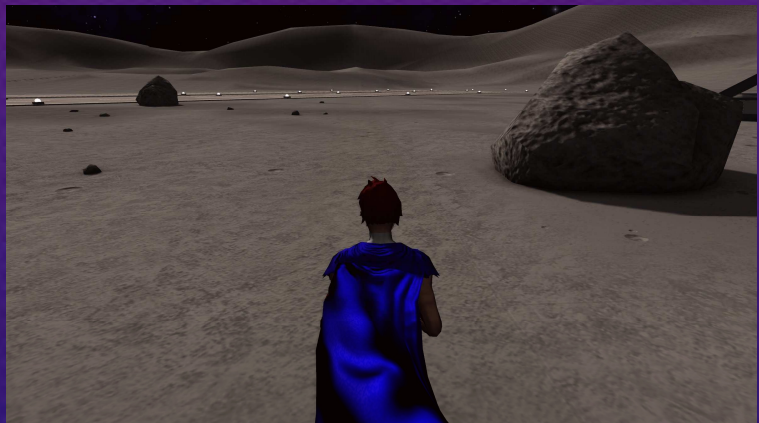
TELEPATHS CAN STILL HURT YOU, BUT THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO CONTROL YOU OR GET IN YOUR MIND LIKE I DID.



SEE YOU IN A FEW WEEKS.



**DANGER: OUTER
AIRLOCK OPENING.**



(* EDITOR'S NOTE: EVEN THOUGH GALATEA IS SCREAMING AT THE TOP OF HER LUNGS, THERE IS NO AIR ON THE MOON, THEREFORE NO SOUND THAT CAN BE GENERATED.)



YOU'RE SURE ABOUT THIS?

I WOULDN'T HAVE RISKED NEAR-LETHAL DOSES OF RADIATION IF I WASN'T.

SPEAKING OF...YOU CERTAINLY RECOVERED NICELY.

TOOK A WHILE, BUT I GOT MY STRENGTH BACK... NOT TO MENTION MY HAIR.

ONE THING THAT I'M WORRIED ABOUT...

YOU MEAN SENDING GALATEA OUT THERE?

I AGREE THAT SHE'S THE BEST PERSON FOR THE ASSIGNMENT, ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE THREATS I WENT THROUGH THERE.

BUT I CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER WHAT SORT OF DANGERS MILLENNIUM CITY WOULD FACE WITH HER AWAY.

IT'S BAD ENOUGH THAT THE CHAMPIONS THEMSELVES ARE SCATTERED ALL ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

BUT PEOPLE HERE HAVE GOTTEN USED TO HER BEING AROUND TO LOOK OUT FOR THEM.

BELIEVE ME, RONIN, THIS ISN'T MY FIRST RODEO.

WE'VE GOTTEN USED TO HAVING A POWERHOUSE LIKE GALATEA AT OUR BECK AND CALL FOR A WHILE NOW.

AND PROJECT MYCROFT CERTAINLY NEEDS TO EXPAND ITS ROSTER IF WE'RE GOING TO MOVE BEYOND BEING JUST AN INFORMATION-GATHERING GROUP.

THANKFULLY, I HAVE JUST THE GUY TO HELP US OUT.

"HE'S BEEN SPENDING
THE PAST YEAR VISITING
THE TRIBES IN THE
AMERICAN NORTHWEST."

"THE INDIAN NATIONS
REFERS TO HIM AS THE
'LEGACY WARRIOR'
BECAUSE OF HIS
FAMILY'S HISTORY OF
FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE
FOR EVERYONE."

"SOME EVEN SAY HIS
ANCESTOR WAS THE
REAL-LIFE
INSPIRATION FOR
THE LONE RANGER."

"I WORKED WITH
HIS UNCLE BACK
WHEN I WAS A
PRIVATE."

"IF HE'S EVEN
HALF HIS
UNCLE'S LEVEL,
HE COULD GET
PEOPLE TO
FORGET ABOUT
IRONCLAD."

"THE MAN WAS A
VERITABLE ONE-
MAN ARMY."

"HE GOES BY THE
NAME OF..."

JOHN BATTLE



JOHN BATTLE
LEGACY WARRIOR

WE'RE TAKING A BREAK...
BUT WHEN WE COME
BACK:

"GO WEST GALATEA!"

GUARDIAN WORDS

Words of wisdom from writer and creator David 2.

Ending Thoughts On the “Psilence of Conscience”

And thus we finish our first big multi-part storyline for “Future’s Guardian”.

Whew!

When I first came up with the idea for the storyline, I had a simple thought:

What if one of the iconic characters from “City of Heroes” were to show up in the world of “Champions Online”?

Immediately I told myself that I couldn’t really bring one of those iconic in-game characters over to Champions. We’re talking about two separate MMO games, even if they were both developed by the same company and inspired by the same paper game. There are intellectual property rights to deal with, especially with a company that was hell-bent on making sure that the “City” was dead and remains dead.

“But what about your characters”, you ask?

Well, true, Galatea Future and Ronin Omega are both originally from the City of Heroes MMO. But they were also my creations, and how they appear here is not like how they appeared in the “City”. Technically they are separate characters, even though they have the same names as their “City” versions.

So the challenge for me was to see just how close I could get that original thought to happen without someone with some corporate credentials complaining. After all, it’s one thing to have some “City” refugee copy a known “City” character and have them running around Millennium City. There are plenty of “City” refugees that are doing just that. But it’s another matter entirely to have those characters show up in a document out on the Internet that people can point to even years later and say “Oh look! Someone put another company’s IP out there! Let’s score some legal money!”

That’s why “Psyche” looks similar to her “Sister” counterpart in the “City”, but not completely different, and why “Malizia” looks nothing like the original “Mother”.

Bad Guys and Gals

The question that was always on my mind was who should be the “B3” or “Big Bad Boss” for this multi-part and multi-faceted story.

There was, of course, The Nationalist, who was clearly a villain. An extremist that hated liberals and mystics and anyone else that didn’t adhere to his group’s narrow religious/conservative views.

What made this person even worse was not just that he was a villain, but he was a villain that paraded himself about as a hero, complete with media and political support. Even when he destroyed property and killed innocent people, he was able to validate it to the masses without question. To some extent this was not unlike some real-world individuals and groups. It was only when he went too far - when he tried to overthrow the city government - that people finally saw him as the villain that he really was.

But he really wasn’t the B3. He was a loose cannon. Someone wound him up and let him loose.

There was also Keira Fyre and her questionable loyalties. A hero? A villain? Well, as you can see, she’s something in between. And she also was someone who was just following instructions.

There was also Doctor Wonderland, the so-called “Psi-Rabbit”. The woman behind the “epidemic” of telepaths and the drug called “Wake-EZ” (*which some “City” refugees should recognize as something they kept on asking about after getting killed*). This was someone I wanted to develop more but just didn’t have the time to.

Continues on next page...

But of course she was only a puppet boss. Ambitious, but really not the master villain.

There was also our old enemy Markman Gold, although in this issue he was more victim than villain.

And then lurking in the shadows was the man behind them all... the mysterious Mister Van Cleef and his equally mysterious VARTECH group.

Van Cleef and VARTECH have been in the shadows going all the way back to Issue #1, helping out Gold's rise to power, being responsible for the physical and media attacks on Galatea Future, and nudging others like The Nationalist to the spotlight. It was only a matter of time before he would step out of the shadows for us to see just who he is.

You'll find out more about him and his connection to Galatea Future in future issues.

Taking A Break

This has been probably one of the most exhausting comic storylines that I've done so far.

We went through a lot. We went through several Blood Moon events, the Winter Event, the Champions Anniversary, Doctor Destroyer's invasion, and even a Foxbat Convention! And that was all the stuff that went on in the MMO. There were many other things that went on outside the MMO that affected the series.

So given all that went on in this issue, I'm somewhat saddened to say that we'll be taking a break from the world of the Champions for a while.

There are several reasons for this, most notably because of the other projects that I'm working on here with Battlerock Comics. There's a really "big hint" of what one of those projects is on the next page. But there have also been some things going on outside of the comics and the world of the Champions that have taken a lot of my time, which would normally be put into doing what I love to do (*which is, of course, this*).

But don't worry! "Future's Guardian" will be back. It's not cancelled. We certainly wouldn't want to leave you hanging with all of these unanswered questions. And especially not after we've just introduced you to... "the big guy". So stay frosty, Champions fans, and keep checking the website for updates.

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NEXT ISSUE...



**THE PROJECT MYCROFT TEAM
WILL BE TAKING SOME MUCH-
NEEDED TIME OFF...**

**BUT WHEN WE COME BACK, IT'S
OFF TO THE WILD-WILD WEST FOR
GALATEA FUTURE!**

AND... WHO IS JOHN BATTLE?



THE DAWN RETURNS...



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