

Brawl Needs Assessment....

"Bring them to me," Thrall ordered to which Mister Division and his gang emerged from their submissive crouches surrounding her at the four sides of a glass display case (from the archaeological wing of Trellix Institute) she was seated atop.

Domina had not yet leapt into action within a level of existence the rest of the people in the room could recognize, but she was in the midst of taking actionable steps in order to determine how best to approach this situation. Again the field of play was not frozen, but the combined clock speed from her internalized network of millions of nanites made it seem like the superheroine was operating at a pace which staggered the entire room into a sluggish halt. These amazing abilities were not limited to the legions of tiny computers cohabiting her body because any living being's thoughts performed the same function. She just had that much more of them working in tandem for the purpose of making a more efficient use of her previously untapped cognitive faculties.

As far as the universe was concerned, the Human race, in particular, only used a small percentage of their brains' true capacity. Whether this was done by design, the result of laziness, or a foreshadowy brilliance in purposeful load-balancing was up for scientific debate. But there happened to be no debating the existence of that extra, unused capacity. How was it Humans could create computers capable of processing high-level calculations and highly complex equations but they did not seem to possess the innate ability to perform these computations themselves? The capability was inherent by the very nature of them coming up with the methods to circumvent their having to do those computations in a shorthand manner! Domina's nanites simply cut out the middle

entity - or calculator in this example, by constructing additional neural pathways in her brain to handle the task while serving as a gatekeeper of sorts and a governor in other respects for the purpose of instilling a greater personal tolerance for the advanced cognition. The influx of information did not need to occur all at once, so initially those tiny computers took up the majority of the slack in processing power, but they slowly conditioned her mind to handle the expansive learning and disengaged their training wheels over time.

Because of this instance and in many respects, Ethereal-given talent did not exist. Those said to have been 'blessed' basically just got to Point Z a little more quickly than somebody who started out at Point A and needed to practice because the neural pathways were already solidified in one case and merely needed to be constructed with dutiful repetition in the other. Following from off this analogy, the nanites functioned like a parent who not only forced their child into fourth grade orchestra for the exposure to its new experience but ensured Domina sat down to practice her viola every single night until her playing was made perfect. All this was done at the Psychological Level within the Plain of Existence, so as easily as a thought occurred prior to the instantaneousness of an action being carried out, the situation of increased mental premonition the superheroine found herself in was really no different.

Interpretation was handled via Domina's HUD that lit up her eyes with the full dossiers of her immediate opponents: Mister Division, the Multiplier, Mighty Miny Minus Meanus, and the Horrible Uhl. All of them were wearing regular street clothes and not their normal (albeit corny) criminal costume garb, but she was about the last person to ever want to comment on another's clothing

choice after the incessant pummeling the superheroine continued to take for her own costuming from an opinionated media trying to pass itself off as journalism and some very mean people from the public crying out for help with low self-esteem issues when openly trying to bash her. Tonight though, the focus of scrutiny needed to be applied to Mister Division's Gang who was about as serious as they were seriously not themselves.

With the gang mentality of tribalism, clothes made the person, but Mister Division and his goons typically took things a couple steps further than colors. They wore costumes as an outward expression of their proposed supervillainy. Nobody took these guys for any sort of a threat in those getups: A head, a dot on a t-shirt, and a cutout piece of cardboard to complete the weak visual of a division sign? For the others, a whole lot of spandex and not a lot of muscles? The behavior was figuratively comical because it imitated the motions of a comic book villain which interestingly was the intent but not meant to be pulled off as half-as-ed as it had been done. Whether a person claimed to be a vigilante or a criminal, there was nothing funny about this business, and their antics caused them to fall into becoming enslaved by Thrall - however she accomplished this otherworldly hold over these reluctant thugs.

Conversely Domina's clothing did make her. Made from nanites, the very material and functionality of its design sprouted from the tiny machines residing within her body. The result of a top secret clinical trial, this was how she beat breast cancer and cheated death. And of this ongoing field test, the superheroine ignored the horrible words of her aforementioned detractors. They were simply being petty and judgmental by poking fun at who they thought she was, making fun of things they did not immediately

understand instead of making an effort to not remain ignorant, and taking shots at her outfit when they should have taken the time to get to know her. No these people were not burdening her neural pathways anymore than the minute file sizes of the few words from both paragraphs it took to address them, but she hated cancer and was now virtually immortal, so who got the last laugh?

Deserving of a full biotechnological systems check, the Corseted Bustier of Strength, Skintight Pants of Dexterity, and Knee-High Heeled Boots of Speed were not gimmicks. The Tiara of Empathic Projection, Bracelets of Defense, and Utility Belt of Purse might have been accessories but were essential in their allotted purposes. Likewise implements such as the outwardly displayed Collar of Control resting on the Utility Belt of Purse and draped over her right hip plus the Cane of Sting, Clamps of Delayed Reaction, and Flogger of Thud sitting inside a nanotechnologically dormant state (within the Utility Belt of Purse) were not a joke. This nanite-based apparel and weaponry were literally Domina's life, and each and every nanite checked out as running in an optimal state.

The focus of Mister Division's Gang was intense. Their numbers made them formidable by default, but Mister Division's ax handle, the Multiplier's plus Mighty Miny Minus Meanus' special abilities, and the Horrible Uhl's hand laser each added to the danger by a factor of two. Thrall's unwavering control also provided an unknown variable Domina would now have to solve for.

Every piece of information was actualized in the view of a real-time illustration as luminescent highlights pulsed over the objects of interest like the weapons for instance. Whereas a normal person would see Mister Division exposing an ax handle from beneath his trench coat and charging forward, Domina had already

seen the concealed weaponry as a pink circle pulsating concentrically with the emergence of the threat! To the right side of her HUD displayed a list of options: Moves, technical education menus, and selectable access to her own weaponry. A grid display, designed for the three-dimensional plotlines of incoming and outgoing trajectory, dotted the otherwise unimpeded and remaining three-quarter view from the superheroine's exceptionally enhanced optical lenses.

Proper preparation beget anticipation.

"Spread out," Domina commanded of her newest thrall - a security guard who had been kneeling in anxious anticipation of his own for any such orders she would have uttered.

"Yes, Domina," he responded while pulling out a hand laser from its hip holster, standing up, and rushing toward a position on the opposite side of the massive museum floor in order to assist his mistress.

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People like Domina don't subscribe to vindictiveness because it's just not in their nature, but when I look into her eyes, I do see disappointment. We may work from opposite sides of the tracks, but she never stopped wanting me to do my best - at whatever it was, even illegal activity. The humiliation I've felt for being a less than second-rate criminal is really only shame for again having cut corners in order to get to the top of my trade.

-Mister Division

If ignorance is bliss and knowing is pain, then the happy medium must be marriage. There are some things I still don't care to know, others I know about and don't particularly care for, and then my husband receives some space - his benefit from any further of my doubt.

-Jules Emerson

Honestly I prefer to operate from behind the scenes because there's not a whole lot I can get accomplished from being all out in the open. The players are much too powerful, yet this isn't a game.

-Ref

RefCo

It's amazing the things I think about when I'm faced with impending danger. I've almost got a near eternity worth of time for contemplation where I get the chance to relive my life over and over as it flashes before my eyes. If anything, those flashbacks are fleeting - a constant reminder of how much more life there is to live.

-Denah Tress

Mega Maze Industries

For
The Long Term.

04: Domina Versus Mister Division's Gang

For want of better positioning, Domina dropped back a couple steps to ready her stance against a charging Mister Division with the Bracelets of Defense out in front. But the intention should not have been misconstrued as protective in nature. Balled fists complemented a counterfighting pose awaiting the single-minded purpose of Thrall's lead slave.

Accompanying Mister Division in the task of tag-teaming Domina was Mighty Miny Minus Meanus who shirked around the back of the display case while the Multiplier and the Horrible Uhl vacated its sides in order to chase down the security guard. Unconcerned with the latter, Thrall kept her focus tuned to the former and an interest driving these proceedings.

People normally considered Domina to be a vigilante because of her deeds or a tramp because of her dress, but being called a home wrecker by Thrall was a first. The aim of the Collar of Control was never to induce infidelity in the relationships of those criminals she collared. Honestly the affairs of the heart or even lust did not ever cross her mind when obedience was the goal. The wrongdoers became submissives called thralls, but compliance as far as thwarting illegal activity served as the ends to the collar's power the superheroine would allow.

Thrall was taking this a bit personally by assuming the moniker of what Domina's obedient servants were called as a name and somehow learning the ability to enslave her victims. However for all the imitation, the superheroine had absolutely nothing to do with this woman's lost love. Maybe for another that might have

been the case. But how she was acting - of this behavior, she might have really been a bit- outside the doors of Trellix Institute and probably drove her man away.

Regardless Domina felt the need to put on a show for Thrall by quickly dispatching the minions her inhospitable hostess had made of Mister Division's Gang. Even with an induced inclination for greater fighting ability, they were still no match for the superheroine by any stretch of their once wild imaginations, so this meant the only way she could be defeated was to fall into the clutches of underestimation.

In Mister Division's hands, an ax handle doubled as a baseball bat, so he swung for the fences. An attempted head shot was met with the resilience of the Bracelet of Defense (that took up over half of Domina's left forearm) when intercepting the attack. Kinetic energy met a greater force via the personal shield generated by the gauntlet technology within the Bracelets of Defense causing the brunt of the stimulus to flow in the opposite direction. A normal Human would have shattered the bones in their wrist upon impact because swinging for the fences in this instance actually meant striking something with the resemblance to an immovable object like a fence with all a person's might. But in the amped-up state Thrall had caused the enslaved criminal to operate, he felt none of the stinging blow which had to be resonating and withdrew from the apparent stalemate of power in order to attempt strike two.

"That's not a cane," Domina chuckled as she extended her right arm outward and called on an abundance of nanites housed from within the Utility Belt of Purse to traverse her body, permeate her skin, and fill her open palm. Upon the accumulation settling into a swarm of technological mass, the tiny robots began to climb over

themselves into a thirty-inch long shaft of low resolution pixels before filling itself in to the higher resolution of corporeal 3-D as a naturally finished rattan cane - the Cane of Sting. The superheroine announced, "This is a cane," and unleashed an uppercut forehand tennis stroke with the grunt to match.

Already out of position from cocking back for an attempt at strike two, Mister Division was helpless when Domina decided to skip straight to strike three. Sent reeling through the air with his limp appendages trailing the flight, the criminal caused Thrall to hop off the display case in avoidance of him crashing back-first through its shattering glass. Splinters of shards exploded outward as the Paleolithic samples lay ruined beneath the force of flung body weight. The ends of the ax handle clanked against the ground when dropped from twitching fingers and rolled to an uneventful halt signifying he was out.

"Shi-!" Thrall replied of her first opportunity to witness Domina's boundless power firsthand.

But of this power, it was not all brute strength. Domina brought a measure of finesse to the battle as her HUD scanned Mighty Miny Minus Meanus' rumbling features that seemed to not only shake the entire wing of Trellix Institute beneath an earthquake of jarring but grew, lengthened, and strengthened as well! There was no secret as to why Thrall had selected the archaeological wing for this fight because the criminal now stood as tall as the eighteen-foot skeletal remains of the cordoned off tyrannosaur exhibit on the superheroine's right side. Beneath her adversary's once baggy clothing which now fit comfortably, every part of his newly-shredded and beastly-exaggerated look was highlighted in pink because any part of his body could do a bludgeoning worth of

damage. The first order of business was to stop, drop, and roll to the right as powerful swipes for her life became fiery red by the proximity indicators of the HUD's enhanced view.

Muscular hypertrophy was being performed at a three-times accelerated level, but from the diagnostic view of Domina's vantage point, there were no illegal performance-enhancing drugs present in Mighty Miny Minus Meanus' system. Uncanny but his metamorphosis appeared to be completely natural. Unfortunate but this change also made him slower. With it not being a normal situation of bodily construction, he still had to overcome the force of gravity pushing against the increased muscle, joint, and bone mass which made him relatively sluggish as he needed to exert more energy to remain upright and even more energy than that to strike. This was the 'toss a bowling ball in the air versus a feather' scenario where each punch, smack, and swipe was badly telegraphed - exacerbated by the fact the criminal was no longer lite on his feet.

Powerful - yes, focused - that happened to be necessitated, but what good were these factors on strength when Mighty Miny Minus Meanus had to fight through a funk of inertial sloth? The HUD was not even required for Domina to plot the incoming dangers or quickly plan her escapes - only the skill from years of training her fight instincts, so she relied heavily on the nanite speed enhancer residing within her Knee-High Heeled Boots of Speed for the slippery nature of her dodges to be realized. There was a blatant difference between what the superheroine was doing and what the criminal was trying to do which stemmed from the path she took to optimize her abilities and the shortcut he chose to maximize his.

Now it needed to be written neither method of enhancement

was comparable to performance-enhancing drugs because each increase in ability happened to be naturally-occurring within their respective bodies, but the method Mighty Miny Minus Meanus took to advantage could be likened to those of the cowardly cop-outs who ingested, injected, or rubbed in the aforementioned illegal substances. This was why Mister Division and his goons constantly got exposed in the rankings of their power levels as frauds despite how powerful they actually appeared to be. This was the reason (as if individual health concerns from putting crap in their bodies was not enough) why kids should never aspire to unnaturally augment their bodies for sporting purposes. And this was why Domina's own body did not reject the universal effects of her nanites outright which would have had much direr consequences than her not being able to hit some stupid ball over a fence. Power levels never lied. To be the best, one needed to beat the best - and not by mimicking the best and cheating their way to an asterisked victory either. The superheroine had honed her skills across years where the exceptional abilities of her body and the powerful abilities of her nanites were one and the same.

By contrast, Mighty Miny Minus Meanus' abilities were clunky at best and not at all second nature at worst, so his recovery time invariably suffered. For Domina to be able to shirk into his body during overhead smashes, out his range during forearm slashes, and around him during his attempts to reset himself for the next series of attacks meant she was already multiple moves ahead in dissecting her opponent to a point of complete capitulation for what it would take to end this round.

With every dodge, the Cane of Sting cut through the air and provided a swoosh as the foreboding accompaniment to an ensuing brutality only an old-school correction could appreciate. The cane

- so subtle yet so painful. As far as implements were concerned, it was completely unassuming, but for Domina, this was a big part of its allure. Simple taps with the weapon net excruciating discomfort, so she did not have to overly exert herself in order to exert her will over an opponent.

And although the Cane of Sting was a surgical instrument as far as its delivery of pain was concerned, Mighty Miny Minus Meanus' metamorphosis gave Domina that much more of an already slow-moving target to be able to hit. So she worked him over with a meticulous, wristy technique and the wanton gaze of a sadistic painter who dutifully oversaw the brushstroke application of welts to a canvas of flesh until the abstract piece was filled up with temporary stripes of red. But the criminal could merely stand frozen in place while the stinging warmth from the superheroine's knack for corporal tendencies seemed to originate across all painful directions at the outer points of him (except for the coccyx, genitals, and kidneys) throbbing to an intense sensation which resonated as much throughout the entirety of his body as it did with the screams leaving his lips.

It was at this point Thrall began to backtrack as she watched Domina working within a blur of attack velocity to bring the largest of Mister Division's Gang down to his knees. Bracing a total collapse, Mighty Miny Minus Meanus threw his arms overhead in toppling to a weakened crouch on all fours as a result of a pain-induced lethargy. He was officially useless to her now.

On the contrary, Domina seemed to derive quite a bit of pleasure from seeing about the task of pummeling a victim (she meant opponent) into submission and witnessing the results of her dominance from a perch-top position standing tall. The superheroine's mouth hung agape and her chest heaved visibly as if

to contain the excitement of a paroxysmal release to a much more tepid satisfaction. The gift of a subject's surrender, whether forced or deliberate, was the present that just kept on giving via continued waves of affirmation - existential throes serving to validate her purpose as supremacy to the core. She drank in the ambrosia of Mighty Miny Minus Meanus' defenselessness as an addiction-satiating fix causing her to want to further assist her pupil's level of understanding about power with a right roundhouse kick to the back of the head. It sent him spiraling like a cone from the vantage point of his appendages flailing behind him. They were far too tender to be moved into a position which could brace for the ensuing impact of crashing through the dinosaur display to the tune of a vicious timeout slamming up against and sliding down the wall in the corner.

Bone dust and obliterated fragments from the tyrannosaur skeletal remains kicked up as surely as an indistinct moan escaped from Domina's lips. The only thing that could make this moment better would be the sight of Thrall reduced to servility before her, so she regained (what of anything was difficult to tell if it had even been lost from) her composure and turned to face the boss lady of this predicament.

There was no telling if Thrall's powers would be powerful enough to enslave Domina since the superheroine so easily broke through the hold she had over the security guard with the Collar of Control. But truth be told, those types of thoughts were presumptuous, and the immediacy of the concern where it should have been placed was elaborated on by the desperation in her voice, "Forget about the security guard and stop..."

Another striking difference between Domina's ability

of Enthral and Thrall's power of Enslave was the autonomy of free thought and the narrow-minded focus of mindlessly following orders. It was the difference between willfully doing what one was asked while retaining individuality and doing what one was told without the requisite creativity that would have allowed a person to figure out the best way to follow those orders toward their successful completion.

To Domina, using the security guard as a decoy would leave the Horrible Uhl no more the wiser and increasingly more vulnerable to a high-speed attack such as this. The criminal was otherwise so occupied with his assigned task and the ensuing laser fight there was absolutely no hope of him catching up to the superheroine's antics when she decided to take the fight to the Fourth Dimension.

Even more intrusive a preparation than the HUD was the immersing view through the stop-motion lens of four dimensions. With chess, players had long since been able to think in three dimensions including being able to see multiple moves ahead and the resultant or successive countermovement ahead of time. But what would happen if life became the chessboard, opposing players were the pieces, and people who mastered Four-Dimensional Strategy could move freely about the chessboard plus move its pieces with impunity? To those paused within a world looking like a badly exaggerated series of frozen special effects complete with unleashed yet hanging laser pulses, utterances of physical exertion trapped in mid syllable, and halted attempts to better or right positioning; it might have appeared as if Domina was moving faster than their eyes could process. But for those who could manipulate the

Fourth Dimension to an eventual advantage, a deep diving glimpse was afforded them into the live-action set of a virtual studio playing out the mechanics of a pretend battlefield complete with a selection of toy soldiers dispersed throughout it.

Some things were worth waiting for, so Domina turned her sights away from a petrified Thrall and located the security guard - her ally. He had been scrambling under intense laser fire from both the Multiplier and Horrible Uhl. His life was moments away from being ended because of a laser pulse that happened to be right on target and the errant slippage of his footing which would have prevented him from being able to make it safely behind better cover. The floor of the archaeological wing was a maze of ancient history but a wide open shooting range for those pursuers who could understand their positioning enough to be able to wedge their prey into predictable acts of self-preservation.

The security guard was merely a target at this point, so Domina rescued him by removing the target from his back - or leaving the target where it was and pulling the person out harm's way rather. This was so simple an assist for her to execute he would probably not even realize a saving throw - yank, had even occurred because of the spatial distortion and the relative instantaneousness of time the help took to pull off. Simply put, the person would just be happy to be alive and would not second-guess the circumstances surrounding a subtle touch of *jamaï s vu* because he was still in the middle of a laser fight.

The scenery of suspended laser pulses and intense action peppering across the archaeological wing to an eerie

halt was not at all disturbing to Domina since perception could always be improved and sharpened with practice. The entire scenario was not even inconceivable because movie magicians had used computer animation to exploit the angles of cameras in order to create vivid new sensory pallets for the eyes of moviegoers to feast upon, so if something could be perceived, it could also be conceived. Thought, or information, was becoming a variable fringe scientists were starting to play around with in trying to tackle some of the equations of existence, and the superheroine or anybody else who had cracked the Fourth Dimension of Strategy would have told them they were on the right path.

Science was funny like that: Skeptical until the facets of conservation were expanded and then real progress could be made or, in the case of thought, uncovered. Humans, as an intelligent collective, did happen to lag considerably behind the rest of the universe as far as the sciences were concerned because of an explanatory stubbornness more deeply rooted in arrogance than method. How could a person search out things like elementary particles based off scientific metrics alone in trying to explain them but remain incapable of actually comprehending where the person's own soul came from which was doing the searching? Some people hated this question, but its answer opened the doors to the Ethereal for an ascendant individual such as Domina.

Entire journals could be written on the subject, but right now, she was more content with exploiting the qualities of the Fourth Dimension to her own aim. Upon stepping away from the repositioned security guard and

approaching the Horrible Uhl, Domina caught a chance to look into the eyes of her next opponent. Nobody, vigilante or criminal, knew what was so horrible about him as he held a two-handed clutch on his hand laser characteristic of a typical thug, but a narrative for Mister Division's entire bunch was starting to form.

These were not malicious criminals the likes of Arsonok, Gutspill, Spoda-Squatch, or Vade. They were petty. The extent of their street cred was some stolen jewelry, purses, and wallets at knife-edge. Somehow with this increased viciousness, Thrall had offered them more. Perhaps that was a clue to her powers. To move from the ranks of the underworld laughing stock into a villainy of relevance was still setting the bar quite low, but it again illustrated another vivid instance of Mister Division's Gang taking the easy way out.

Shameful - Domina thought as she removed the hand laser from the Horrible Uhl's grasp and placed it on the floor beside him. Normally during a disarm, the weapon would have been tossed aside at a distance, but this was not necessary for what she had planned. The superheroine happened to be more than capable of molding minds within the Fourth Dimension, so posing bodies was easy. After some careful manipulation to separate his hands and rearrange their placement, he now stood in the posture of a begging puppy with those hands extended outward in an overhand manner.

Such the sadist, the mere thought of this brought back the shivers of an anticipatory elation to Domina as the Horrible Uhl helplessly awaited his correction. There was

not another pain quite like getting the tops of one's hands caned.

"When," whop, "are you," whop, "going to learn," whop, "to be," whop, "yourself," whop! Domina took to this chastisement like a supernatural teacher with a yardstick.

And the Horrible Uhl just stood there receptive.

But she was not finished and commanded his pliantly suggestible mind to, "Turn them over," and he slowly complied with the order so the superheroine might administer five more whacks from the Cane of Sting to the palms of the criminal's hands.

"...her," Thrall said with an emphasis before the bite in her voice trailed off at the sight of the Horrible Uhl's body collapsing. To see him writhing around in agony - screaming and clutching his hands without seemingly having been touched and then to turn around and see Domina still coming from the exactly previous position terrified her!

Thankful to his lucky stars, the security guard pushed to his feet after surviving a barrage of laser pulses from the Multiplier in order to not push his luck by remaining stationary as an even easier target for the criminal to hit. He returned fire with his own weapon when snaking out behind a sizable cave display for cover.

Both wax people on display in front of the cave's entrance did not survive however as the Multiplier indiscriminately mowed them down into molten heaps. It was his hope the laser pelting would keep the security guard at some semblance of bay while he turned around to address Thrall's latest commands.

Unhurried, Domina walked with the steady, pointed pace of a stalker - or in her case, a huntress. With the Multiplier speeding to intercept the superheroine's purposely leisurely pursuit, she decided meeting the incoming opposition in stride would be a much better course of action rather than rushing to lock up with Thrall. Data points continued to flood her HUD, and in none of those were the locations of Tunnel Diode or the security guard's partner, so this projected confidence was more a cautious, conservative nature and not conceit. The smell of a trap was always odorless until sprung and replaced with the fragrant aroma of one's own spilled blood.

Thrall's use of herself as the bait for this trap was causing her to become increasingly uneasy the closer Domina got. Two yards seemed like only two feet but felt more like two inches. She backtracked ever so slightly allowing the Multiplier to step right into the distance between her position and the eerie focus of the superheroine's arguably lascivious gaze.

While the direct eye contact with Domina might have been severed by Thrall now staring at the back of the Multiplier's head, there was no hiding its significance - a revelation that not only frightened and sickened but excited her all at the same time. There was no mistaking how nervous she was in taking on an individual as powerful as the superheroine. There was no denying the palpitations which caused her chest to flutter with the ebbs of repugnance and flows of disallowance. And there was no explaining why the prospects of potentially losing this battle seemed almost (if not) more arousing and satisfying than winning.

Nothing happened to be lost in the translation of Domina's body language, and even less was lost on the portrayal of her

charismatic predation which openly sought to pound the most levelheaded of psyches into an unrequited lust for submission at the behest of a towering seduction. This very essence of desire derived from a perverted regression back toward the primal, base yearning to not necessarily be controlled but taken care of. If being controlled came along with the package of letting go, then so would be the surrender. She was going to make Thrall want this. And after the superheroine was finished, collaring her adversary would not even be necessary, but she might still decide to do so anyway.

With a disheartening clarity, Thrall tried to fight back against an inward shiver being caused by the addicting influence of an alluring enigma. To fall in love with this woman she hated - she did not even swing that way. But some people were simply larger than life where a person could only resist their charms for so long before fully succumbing to their graces much more deeply than had the person just given in initially. This inclination to be so esoterically taken knew no boundaries, gender, or sexuality because the potential promise from its indentured state of belonging merely knew the competence of the inevitable caretaker. A closed mind was easier to seduce and less likely to purge itself from the crutch of a guilty conscience while engaging in these games of power exchange they played. For her, the passion of preference would soon become too overwhelming a decision to overcome.

For Domina, turning another woman into a thrall was perpetually enticing albeit incredibly rare, but amorous thoughts like those were also presumptuous and dangerous in lieu of the fact the Multiplier was standing between her and this vaunted prize of a feminine soul. On Earth, men continued to commit the majority of

crimes, but even with that, she chose to use the Collar of Control sparingly. It was a sinister implement of last resort which could bend any being to the superheroine's will, but this (technically) irreversible honor was often saved for pattern abusers. The aim would always be to reach males earlier on in their socialization as boys with a variety of corporate means from her Chief Executive Officer Denah Tress secret identity so the mere thought of domestic violence would sicken them, but cultures were slow-reacting and she occasionally needed to install thralls in high places who could better effectuate the changes. Just as women were not immune from the impacts of barbarism, they were also not exempt from dishing some of the cruelty out either. Thrall fell into this category with both the familiarity of a deliberate moniker and the commonality of mimicked abilities crying out in an open invitation for that collared fate as perhaps a means of deliverance away from the rigors of a banal existence. Her adversary had wanted this since long before the battle had even begun - the subtle comfort and belonging only enthrallment could provide. But to go to this extent? What was the old saying about imitation and flattery again?

Well Thrall had hoped the entire narrative of her ruse would prove interesting enough to cause Domina to walk willingly into an obvious trap but found herself stumbling backward over the footsteps of indecisiveness - praying she could hold out a little bit longer against the superheroine's wiles in stifling the uncannily welcome anticipation for wanton, personal destruction! Her man never had a chance. Not against this bitc-. He had been mercilessly collared, stolen, and then ruthlessly subjugated until his heart began to beat for another. In order to avenge him, strength needed to be drawn from that hapless plight if there was

any chance at preventing an encore presentation.

But Domina's eyes told a different story - a story the HUD replayed along a Picture-in-Picture visual from a split screen in real time. The name of Thrall's man was Sal Dushane. From cross-referencing a multitude of files normally used for performing background checks and had been made available to Domina via access to Mega Maze Industries' Human resources data, she learned her adversary's real name was Indiya McCollough. Beautiful. The accent was on the second syllable of the first name. And there was much more to Indiya's backstory than had initially met the superheroine's nanite-enhanced eye:

Plaza Verde

Having been the protector on the north side of Buffalo Grove for the longest time before taking a vigilante's oversight across the entire city, Domina realized many from the newer, northern parts probably had no idea about the flowing cornfields and smaller dirt roads that used to inhabit much of the farmland areas on the south side decades ago as part of a rich history. The place had grown up considerably from those modest roots to include some form of overt commerce in every conceivable crevice. Whether this explosion of development was for the better or not, she reserved judgment.

Ironic because that same judgment had just been passed on Sal who now simply existed from his knees facing away from Domina in positioning but never more connected to her as far as direction was concerned. Yes things were a lot quieter all those many decades ago - quiet like the

'there' and 'then' of this recent memory. Hopped-up on weed, pills, and alcohol - it all must have seemed like the fitting crescendo to a lush dreamscape of irresponsibility. The nanites from her Collar of Control cleaned his system out and sobered him up by absorbing and redistributing the chemicals to those bodily areas which could more appropriately use them or getting rid of them by sending any waste to the excretory system. Drenched in frosty sweat and wreaking of the illegal substances as they also secreted from his pores, he was being subjected to the worst of all possible hangovers: Unbearable guilt and overwhelming remorse.

Six people were dead, and Sal offered no resistance when a member of the Buffalo Grove Police Department removed the murder weapon from his disinterested fingers. A person did not expect to be gunned down when shopping at a strip mall. Sure the per capita increase in crime was rising steadily, but Buffalo Grove was a thriving city of millions that not only attracted intergalactic attention because of its diverse culture but also every lunatic from Anatoga to Zahn and all dimensions in between. The only thing was these so-called lunatics would never shoot up innocents in this manner to draw attention to themselves, so the unwritten rules of established boundary lines were often at play. Occasionally an innocent or two might get caught up in the crossfire, but they were rarely ever the focus of the mayhem.

So what did this make Sal? Through Domina's Tiara of Empathic Projection's synchronous communication with the nanites from the Collar of Control which happened to be

completely dispersed throughout his body, she had immediate access to his entire biography knowing full well about who he was. Some people just never thought before they acted - a skill that came with unfortunate circumstance, awkward experience, and accumulated wisdom. The superheroine was well aware of how fallible a person could possibly be having made mistakes herself obviously. Some major. But a murder-suicide did not happen to be anywhere among them. In collaring him, she had been given no other choice to the contrary. Those six people were gone forever, and he was going to be forced to live with it.

This was not the time for Domina to become political because she had no way of understanding the forthcoming sorrows from the next of kin, but the superheroine did have an inkling of an idea into the Ethereal having ascended in her own rite and knocking at the celestial gateway herself. Death was too easy for Sal, and suicide was always a cop-out. His new responsibility, as she commanded, was for him to repent, and this was going to be no easy task. Psychologically humbled by being broken and trained to obey his mistress, he relinquished any other choice in the matter.

There were no safe words as far the Collar of Control was concerned. One stint within the Fourth Dimension - one disciplinary session at the feet of Domina, and that was it. This was all it took. She was so adept in her trade prospective thralls were often left begging for the torture to continue. They asked for more pain for no other reason than it made the superheroine happy. And once

these people began to live for her pleasure, it was over. No greater elixir than submission existed for them in this everlasting state, so the anguish stemming from any sort of disobedience crushed their hearts.

Although the Collar of Control would work on other races, Humans were generally more repressed than most, so these methods of correction and punishment became relatively simple to accomplish with them. The guide who lifted those boundaries possessed infinite credibility. And the person whose boundaries were lifted often became that much more susceptible to the fall because of the newfound freedom. This was the ultimate mindfu--.

From an inexplicable temporal trap where Domina and Sal would not be disturbed for perceptibly hours, days, weeks, years, eons - as he could describe it, she had him suspended via an intricate rope tie at his arms, elbows, chest, waist, knees, and ankles in some sort of darkened realm. One-on-one. Clothed female, nude male. Exposed. Vulnerable. The superheroine's prospective thrall appeared to be flying from a sprawled position within the web of her rope-work - physically portrayed in this manner and mentally subjected to not only the rigors of submitting to that but the strain of the ropes against an uncomfortably positioned body.

Shortening breath and numbing limbs caused from the tension of the bondage were the least of Sal's worries. When Domina took to the Cane of Sting with an earnest smile only a sadist could love and only a masochist could appreciate then beat him to within an inch of his life again and again, normal existence no longer held any meaning. So

many chose to pretend the hardships of their lives held the validation for such unsightly behavior as drowning sorrows in alcohol and drugs or lashing out because they might have actually believed somebody might buy into an 'out of control' plea. Like nobody else had problems too. From the Fourth Dimension, the superheroine could inflict true pain to let a person understand how bad things really were not, and in this realm the control of the outcome was relegated to a simple choice.

Domina could amp up the intensity appropriately - both incrementally through stress positions for the pain sluts and infinitely through concentrating on certain areas or moving onto others for the sake of those with lower pain thresholds and even less tolerance for its continuance. Her methods were no more cruel than the crimes causing her to have to act with this retributive force in the first place. But everybody was different, so there was an art to the superheroine's torture. This was all about finding out what made the prospective thrall tick so she could destroy the remnants of a failed life to this point and build the person back up in her own reimagining. Some combination of mental molestation and physical suffering usually did the trick.

However Domina was not in this for fear. She was in this for understanding.

Held up by the clutches of two police officers, Sal's head dangled downward via a contemplative stupor. What he had just experienced at Domina's hands could no more be put into words than could his thoughts center in around him previously having done the unthinkable.

"How could you do this to your lady friend?" Domina asked from behind Sal. "How could you put her through this? To say nothing of the strangers whose lives you took, she deserves better than you."

"Yes, Mistress," Sal conceded before being carted away. The police were used to it by now. None of what Domina had done would have been admissible or stood up in court, but he was now so obedient and submissive to her he would willingly cooperate. Neither the judge, legal counsel, nor jury needed to know anything otherwise.

In the end, this was what Sal wanted and how Domina ultimately broke him. With his mind free and clear from intoxicants, she was able to work on his empathy. He became sincerely sorrowful over the six deaths while languishing inside the Fourth Dimension, but then the superheroine dropped that last tidbit about Thrall on him when they were each returned to actuality.

The proverbial straw broke the camel's back or, in Sal's case, his will. He could never make the tragedy of his behavior up to Thrall, so the only thing left was to make this up to himself and work to repair his own soul by attempting to live up to Domina's standards living selflessly for another as the superheroine's latest thrall.

Had not Thrall already ordered the Multiplier to attack, it was unclear as to whether the orders could have been given again or even rescinded from this moment forward - and after finally ascertaining the meaning behind Domina's caring eyes. Saved from the nonsense of having to deal with Sal's perennially dumbass- by the Collar of Control but because those eyes were saying his

collaring had been done to protect her - for her, it was ironic she might soon be rejoining him under the cultlike consensus as another in the superheroine's stable of enamored thralls.

There had been three choices back then: Allow Sal to get away with the cliché copycat murder by letting him blow his brains out; capture him, do nothing, and spawn the spectacle of a trial; or collar him and ensure he was removed from Thrall's life completely. There was not going to be any hint of a long distance relationship between that two-way glass of the penitentiary visitation area. She deserved so much better, and his mandate was to reject her outright as per Domina's instructions. It was cold how the strings were cut, but this way was always better than being led on or off an emotional cliff.

There were no easy letdowns in either instance, and yet Thrall blamed Domina almost exclusively for the many faults of Sal. That name 'Thrall' suited Indiya because of how impressionable she really was - not quite gullible but soft, a closet submissive who might not have even recognized this impending nature as such. In death and in unbound life, Sal would have just dragged or continued to drag his lady friend right on down with him. Domina questioned whether the title of being a servile 'thrall' actually suited her though. Something had caused these conflicted feelings to emerge. Someone created this antagonism which now saw the superheroine and this new adversary at odds. Somehow the peculiar power to enslave was imbued on a reticent individual - nobody more than a random civilian who had nothing to do with a much larger battle but was being made to become collateral damage in its waging.

This was classic Sister Matron, but although Thrall was inclined to serve the older sister and arch nemesis of the woman who stole her man, she already found herself well past the halfway point of becoming a thrall. The difficult part had already been accomplished - this want for servitude, to know what it was like. To submit oneself to someone else's control. To experience an established hierarchy. And to allow its temptation to ensnare an individual within the addicting euphoria of liberation: Freely expressing one's congenital nature, freedom from having to make any decisions, free. Domina was superior on an actual level - not a superficial one, so that statement had nothing to do with class warfare. This was never meant to imply a person happened to be in any way inferior - just willing to give another such as a god their due or, in the superheroine's case, a goddess.

But in order for Domina to claim her prize, the Multiplier first needed to be dealt with. She readjusted her right-handed grip on the Cane of Sting and began to shake it off to her side demonstrating the implement's flexibility as it cut through the air with a continuous, hollow whistle. Anybody from the corporal punishment crowd knew exactly the severity of pain this display of warning could translate to in its infliction.

Had not Thrall's influence been so firmly implanted in the Multiplier's psyche, he would have run. Lightweights like stickup kids, purse snatchers, and wallet lifters did not tangle with Domina because they often saw on the evening news the horrifying results that befell the tougher of their criminal brethren and could only imagine what she would have had in store for them.

The Multiplier's mindless focus on defeating Domina extended outward in the form of a ring of - well, twenty additional

Multipliers. Twenty-one total combined corporeal and holographic versions flooded her HUD as she spun around slowly in order to behold the crowd surrounding her. The science otherwise fascinated the superheroine or her secret identity probably would not have done well as the chief executive officer of an entertainment company that developed this kind of tech. What she happened to be witnessing was a play off the first generation True-D module Mega Maze Industries invented.

For a hoodlum to have taken the video game technology from Domina's company and reengineered it into this type of application was impressive. For him to have chosen crime as his lead profession rather than engineering was sad. She had seen this story time and again across Buffalo Grove's tough streets of individuals who had enormous skills and the brains to match but lacked the exposure to a different way or means of getting on the path to opportunity.

Honestly: What underworld leader could not calculate figures based off money like the most astute economist or commodities broker? Which drug dealer would not be capable of making a chemistry professor proud when authoring their master thesis? How could a vice cop's snitch not make it big in the legal profession from either side of the judicial bench with their deep understanding of law and consequences?

Domina worked with felons outside the thug variety on a daily basis, but their activities were usually legal (albeit shady) in the corporate universe. The financial sector, drug companies, and legal system. Three of the biggest rackets out there! She was proud of Mega Maze Industries' felon-friendly work programs. In order for her company to beat the best, it needed to acquire, train, and retain the remainder of untapped talent from the

opposite side of the tracks. They already showed initiative. If these people were willing to change careers from the illegal occupations (with nothing but downside) into legal employment (with nothing but upside), then their open-mindedness made them candidates worthy of being given a chance - the same chance any qualified applicant should be afforded. In her mind, equal opportunity extended beyond the protected categories to the often overlooked and neglected ones.

And although paying former criminals a salary was a lot less drain on the balance sheet than the higher taxes stemming from paying the societal share of their incarceration, Domina's aims were not always business motivated. This was a nice perk to be sure, but the trick was to reach the children before it even came to that. Low expectation family members and negative influence peers could often drain the innocence from a youth in no time flat causing them to no longer wish to dream and ultimately become satiated by the nightmare of a lackluster typicalness. For these kids, she took a referendum upon herself by paying to modernize the school systems, lure back the most competent teachers, and incentivize the children's households to take a more active role in the lives of the future.

Child-rearing was best done by committee, and each piece needed to perform in tandem for proper development to occur. The inner-city schools were now endowed so kids and faculty did not need to worry about bricks falling out the wall - things that would not be tolerated in any other funded districts. The content from ancient textbooks was replaced with the continuous, quiet sync of eBook readers so this newer content could always be kept current despite the budget because eBooks were so much less expensive to purchase outright plus update. Physical education was made

mandatory and recess had been saved from lunatic politicians who grew up with every one of its perks and benefits but then flipped and derived some nonsense justifications as to why kids should be cooped up in hard chairs all day long. This by itself was inexplicable, and Domina would sooner collar those types of individuals than the vicious killers who normally warranted it to bring them more in line with her views and values because these lawmakers (often unfortunately) directly affected the children.

Teacher payroll was removed from the discussion such that this paragraph need not even be further elaborated upon.

Being an entertainment company, Mega Maze Industries took the old technology company tact of 'developing legions of future followers when delivering discounted or free product to schools en masse for their use' even further by rewarding the children for good grades with its latest products! The difference here was that low income families could not always afford the positive reinforcement tools of the conditioned response trade, so when the stellar report cards came back, they now no longer needed to. Parents were now added to the company's distribution channel, and an inkling of subsidized credibility was added to their arsenal.

None of this was meant to be the be-all and end-all for the salvation of universal education, but there was nothing wrong with empowering parents all the while knocking down the many barriers to their children's learning. This was not just a tax break to Domina. Outside of companies like Mega Maze Industries, RefCo, and Ennead Tech Corp - nobody else was even doing anything, so the tax break must not have been all that great to begin with! But companies were founded upon innovation and ideas, so it was a crime for them to not at least extend a little ingenuity back to the stabilization of their local schools.

Every little bit helped, but when the proactive and retroactive measures were not applicable, Domina welcomingly came to the reactive task of pacifying these mean streets in her role as a superheroine. Each of the twenty-one Multipliers reached for their respective hand lasers, and apparently the Multiplier had made some serious technological strides as mobile corporeal 3-D was now a reality. She needed to be concerned with all of them and engaged in a series of acrobatic reverse somersaults and spiraling dodges on the completion of the final landing in order to dodge a kaleidoscope of laser pulses. The Bracelets of Defense were more than capable of deflecting rudimentary lasers, so the evasion was more about allowing her HUD sufficient enough time to gather the requisite information about the video game accessory's modding. Honestly a six-figure salary was in there somewhere, but the job offer was hinging on such common respect as the applicant being willing to stop shooting at the chief executive officer of the company!

Quite formidable with technology herself, Domina might not have known exactly how the Multiplier spliced together ultrasound for the physicality of the holograms with an interlaced laser projection system to create their visuals, but neither of those were the focus of her scans. She wanted access to the emitters. When Multiplier Number Fourteen got in a little close, the superheroine swiped at it once with the Cane of Sting to hold the adversary at bay before returning the menacing implement to the Utility Belt of Purse through the absorption of its nanites back into the skin on the palm of her hand so she could engage in some hand-to-hand combat.

The parents' groups would never okay a video game experience as dangerous as this, so Domina wanted to try it out for the sake

of posterity. From a crouched position after her landing, she came up with a right punch to Multiplier Number Fourteen's gut. It felt real! The crisp hit detection was not only spot-on, but the physical feedback gave the superheroine an additional sense of depth perception. She followed up with a left uppercut which struck directly under her adversary's chin knocking him from off his feet and onto his back complete with writhing!

A preprogrammed pain subroutine - this was not. Every Multiplier seemed to be moving with purpose and originality. Domina spun around to intercept a laser pulse with the Bracelet of Defense on her right forearm - her right arm bent and holding firmly in a muscle flex pose. Multiplier Number Eighteen came up from the superheroine's weak (read: unguarded) left side with an attempted right punch to her face. But the HUD ensured she was never caught by surprise, so a backward lean caused the attack to go just wide of its mark whizzing past her nose.

In a windmill motion, Domina brought her left arm back around for the delivery of a second uppercut but this time from the focus of its muscle impacting the elbow of Multiplier Number Eighteen's right arm. A favorite move of hers, it offered varying degrees of punishment and was not necessarily meant to break the arm unless her adversary did not submit to the added right-handed grip on his vulnerable wrist (which he did) that initiated a twirling hip toss sending him flying through the air and into Multipliers Number Four, Seven, and Thirteen.

From a squatting position now, Domina snapped off a right sweep catching Multiplier Number Nine, knocking him off his feet, and sending him to a painful landing on the back of his head where he rolled over and immediately reached to grab for it. These holograms seemed to be feeding off real-time pain sensory

information from the Multiplier, so she worried about this being a bidirectional connection to the original version. The multiplicity of autonomous personality had to be tied back somehow.

Technobabble aside, it meant taking out enough of these Multipliers might actually kill the Multiplier which Domina did not want. With administrator write access to True-D's firmware and not the spoofed overlay of code from his hack, she changed the visual and usurped control over its macro.

The fourteen remaining holographic Multipliers became holographic Dominas who then swarmed the ousted Multiplier. In the disorientation of losing control over the program, he had a terrible time at keeping the real Domina in focus. Turned tables left him surrounded and looking around frantically for some means of escaping the predicament.

But with Domina, only submission was ever the way out, so she aided the Multiplier in this endeavor by grasping his right shoulder with her left hand, ramming a powerful right knee into his stomach, and knocking the wind from his lungs plus the consciousness from his mind which caused the program to end and the likenesses to disappear. The superheroine then re-formed the Cane of Sting in the palm of her right hand and gave him a solitary albeit excruciating swat on the butt to remember her by when he would eventually wake up and find it difficult to sit down for the coming few weeks. And that was going to leave a mark for the duration. She smiled at the exaltation of the thought and gently laid her former adversary across the floor.

Domina then turned her attention toward a cowering Thrall.

Please purchase a copy to read the rest!