

Redeemers Issue #1

Readings for the Day
St. George's Cathedral
Sunday, May 30, 2004

Isaiah 14:12

How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!

Jeremiah 50:39

"So desert creatures and hyenas will live there,
and there the owl will dwell.
It will never again be inhabited
or lived in from generation to generation."

Session Summary

We open on an angel being chastised for his lack of humility by his celestial superiors. His sentence - to be stripped of most of his powers and be sent to Earth for a time to care for the humanity he has begun to despise. They warn him that a time is coming when humanity will be threatened, and it is up to him to save them. He will come upon three nature spirits which he should enlist in this battle. Every Sunday he is to go to St. George's Cathedral in Freedom City and listen to the Scripture reading of the day during Mass, and it is there he will receive further instructions. And then Archangel is cast down from Heaven like lightning.

Lewis Ray, aka "Stingray," watches the skies from his expensive penthouse apartment in Kingston, overlooking the Promenade and the Wading River. Since the Shards of Kulkulmectul pierced his body and gave him control over clouds and lightning, and awakened his conscience from its cold slumber, he has been watching the skies for a sign. He sees in the distance a thin tongue of flame, streaking down from heaven towards the city. He summons a cloud from the sky to carry him forth, wondering what this portent might mean.

Meanwhile, Darren Stone, occasionally employed construction worker, is enjoying a sunny Memorial Day with friends in Liberty Park. On nice days like this he can sometimes almost forget his gangbanger days with the Southside C's, back before he got out, and back before that accident at the buried temple beneath that construction site... Suddenly, a flash - and an explosion rocks the area as something falls from the sky and strikes the heart of the park! As other picnickers scream, he looks about for a good place to hide so that people do not witness his calling forth of the earth to help him. Moments later, he steps out coated in a thick layer of stone, using the powers the unknown spirits had granted him.

Nearby, a pair of moss-covered eyes snap open. The nature spirit Vedergalliningen, called the Sylvan Sentinel by faeriekind, has slumbered here for centuries in his tree form; when he closed his eyes last they looked upon a vast, untracked wilderness of primeval forest. He senses an unusual power coursing through him and the nearby plants. As he steps out of the copse of trees into an open area, he sees a whole tribe of nearby humans, already panicked, who begin to flee when they sight him, yelling "Run! Freaks!!" Confused, he strides slowly into the life-giving sunlight. He is not surprised but is vaguely curious to see a smoking crater to one side of the clearing and a creature of elemental earth to another.

Another figure pushes through the running crowd onto the scene. This one is covered in a glimmering, silvery sheen. His muscular, black-shirted form bears a stylized "M" on his shirt and he wears a small mask across his eyes. "Halt! In the name of, uh - Megastar!" he calls out to the two creatures before him, sounding a bit unsure of himself. He hold out an arm towards each figure, and alien energy crackles around both fists.

As Stingray drifts towards the park, he sees a blur, starting at the distant Freedom League headquarters downtown but closing the distance to the park with frightening speed.

A form suddenly materializes in Liberty Park atop a nearby restroom building - it's the blue spandex-suited form of the Freedom League member, Johnny Rocket! The remaining bystanders that haven't escaped the area yet let out a cheer. He takes one look at the tree-man and says "Not this time, Grovemont! You're gonna be fertilizer when I'm done with you!" He is across the green and has struck his target by the time Darren remembers that some tree-dude the press called the Green Man had animated a bunch of trees and generally caused trouble in the park a couple months back. Shrugging, he plods to the attack as well.

As Vedergalliningen lashes out at his tormentors, Archangel rises from his crater on wings of light. As Johnny Rocket lifts the tree-man up into the air on a whirlwind of air and Megastar prepares to deliver a knockout punch, the angel remembers his admonishment about meeting friendly nature spirits, and decides that these cheeky monkeys have got to go. He wings to the attack, firing bolts of cosmic energy into the fray. The tree-man suddenly transforms into a mass of writhing vines! Megastar grabs him and throws him at the approaching angel.

Stingray finally drifts into the park on his summoned cloud, and concludes that whatever's going on, Johnny Rocket is generally on the good side of things. Crackling electricity surrounds the vine-man, skidding him along the ground and bouncing him into a fountain. The angel swoops down to deliver a blow to Stingray. One tendril of the vines snakes out to a nearby hedge, and the mass goes limp as the Sylvan Sentinel transfers his lifeforce into a nearby tree. Johnny Rocket, Megastar, and Stingray demand that the angel and Stone surrender. The two of them assume a more peaceful stance.

The diminishing screams of the fleeing populace suddenly start to get louder and closer again...

Parkgoers flee, panicked, back into the area pursued by what appear to be huge, mutated hyenas! Johnny Rocket and Megastar take off to try to contain the problem in the rest of the park, while the rest of our heroes battle the hyenas nearby that are trying to devour picnickers. The Sylvan Sentinel, from a tree's leafy heights, begins to send down vines to strangle the pesky beasts while Stone summons a creature of earth to fight them. Stingray spots a figure skulking over by the fountain and moves to confront a large, giggling hyena-man, who proceeds to hook Stingray with his vicious claws and toss him halfway across the melee.

As Archangel smites a hyena about to devour a bystander, the hyena transforms into a collared, leashed cocker spaniel. It quickly becomes clear all the hyenas are transformed versions of dogs that were at the park. Stingray takes to the air and begins lobbing lightning at his assailant, but the Hyena crosses the clearing in stride, levers himself up a tree by driving his claws into its bark, and flings himself at Stingray, grappling him and bearing him to the ground. Meanwhile, one of the hyenas kills a victim with its crushing jaws, a friend of Stone's who had been enjoying a simple Memorial Day outing.

Stone moves to help Stingray, who after being savaged by the Hyena's claws begins to giggle maniacally. The Hyena turns on Stone and rips through his rocky coating, gutting the hero! Archangel and the Sylvan Sentinel attack the creature. The Hyena strikes Archangel, but the angel has heard before the cosmic joke that generates the hyena's laugh and is unaffected. The Sylvan Sentinel slams the Hyena with a mighty blow, smashing him into the stone wall of the restroom building. The Hyena, unconscious, transforms back into a human form!

The angel lays his hands on the two critically injured heroes and heals them, saving their lives. The four gather aboard Stingray's cloud and withdraw to his penthouse as STAR squad members sweep the park (they thoughtfully leave a "Hi, I'm the Hyena" sign on the vine-tangled perpetrator).