

THE HERO COMPLEX

A story about fake superheroes and real conspiracies

PROLOGUE: Stick to the Script (PART 2)

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THIS IS A WORK OF SATIRE
(But in an infinite Multiverse, it's all true somewhere)

For my amazing daughters who will always be the most important people in my life,
and who definitely should not read this. Not yet.

This book contains frequent coarse language, occasional very coarse language, drug use, sexual references, horror themes, acts of violence (funny), acts of violence (not so funny), descriptions of acts of violence (very funny), sexism & mysogyny (never funny), a bunch of dicks (people, not penises), descriptions of a sexual assault (not very graphic, but still potentially confronting), a violent act of retribution (possibly related), depictions of mental illnesses and other troubles of the brain (everyone's a bit fucked up), political opinions (mostly Left-ish), blasphemy (mild), atheism (implied), mockery (general), thinly veiled references to real people (living and dead), unveiled references to real people (mostly dead or close to it), excessive use of nerdy pop-culture references (mostly Marvel), poorly thought through philosophy (mostly wrong), lots more swearing (fuck!), some overt virtue signaling (save the bees!), Oxford commas (here's one...), and jokes that you might not like.

IT IS ALSO REALLY SILLY, AND POSSIBLY WON'T MAKE SENSE.

The opinions of the characters, and the opinions of the author are not necessarily the same.
Some of these people are real dicks.

If you're cool with all of that, read on.

PART 2

In which a poorly thought through Field Op goes horribly wrong.

The Story So Far

Felicity is hungover, late, and pissed off. She's also a fake superhero called The CopyCat, but that only happened a couple of hours ago. She's with another fake superhero called Derek. His superhero name is Eagle-Man. He has ridiculous wings.

Felicity and Derek are on a Field Op (a fake superhero event) called **Operation: Bloodlust**. It was written and directed by Sepp Weedling, who is an asshole. The plot has lots of holes in it.

When Felicity and Derek find Peter (a young boy who definitely should not have been in the building, even though it is his house) Felicity is ready to call the whole thing off. But for reasons that can only be described as flimsy plot devices, that option is not available.

When Felicity and Derek find Peter's dead parents, the whole scenario takes a sinister turn.

CHAPTER 6: THE DELINQUENT

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This is a flashback scene: Felicity's life story in as few words as possible.

It's a "how the fuck did i get here?" moment for Felicity, and the answer flashes before her eyes. Felicity starts about age 10 and finishes in the present. There's nothing sexualised about her clothes or her poses in any of these images. This isn't Manga.

Panel 1

Caption only.

CAPTION: As Felicity stood at the door to Peter's parents room, a series of flashes happened in parts of her brain that she works very hard not to visit too often. Flashes of moments in her life, moments that led, directly and indirectly, to this moment.

These are those moments...

Panel 2

It's 1987. We're in a gymnasium (the gymnastics type, not the bodybuilding type). A male coach wearing very short shorts is talking to Felicity's mom. Felicity (age 10) is standing right there.

Coach: She's got no discipline. She's never gonna make it.

Caption: HEARING THIS.

Panel 3

Felicity's POV. She's sitting on her bed with a pile of loot (stuff a young girl would steal from a discount store) on the bed in front of her. She's smiling mischievously.

CAPTION: GETTING AWAY WITH IT

Panel 4

Felicity 's POV. She's looking across the desk at a shopping mall security guy. There are some shopliftable items on the desk between them.

CAPTION: GETTING CAUGHT

Panel 5

Felicity 's POV. Felicity is being yelled at by her coach (female, very overweight) while standing next to a balance beam.

COACH: **You're too fat to be a champion.**

CAPTION: THIS COACH IN PARTICULAR

Panel 6

Felicity (age 16) standing at a door looking into the room. You can't see her face. You can't see what she's seeing.

CAPTION: FINDING HER DAD

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Panel 1

Felicity (age 15) being escorted to a police car by 2 police officers

CAPTION: BEING ARRESTED

Panel 2

Felicity's POV . She is sitting across a kitchen table from 2 men in black suits. Obvious MIB reference. Also visible is a middle aged woman, possibly in the kitchen behind the men.

MIB 1: Your mom will never worry about money again.

MIB 2: And neither will you.

FELICITY: And if I don't sign?

MIB 1: It would be best for all concerned if you did.

CAPTION: RECRUITMENT DAY

Panel 3

Late 90's teen magazine cover. Cover image is a posed PR image of a teen superhero group that look a bit like The Runaways. Felicity (age 16) is standing on the far right of the group, looking completely disinterested.

HEADLINE: NEW TEEN SUPER TROOP!

CAPTION: JOINING THE DELINQUENTS

Panel 4

Felicity (age 17) is standing over one of the other delinquents who appears to have just been kicked in the balls. Hard. And his nose is bleeding. The others are looking on, shocked. Also, Sepp is there, with a clipboard looking unimpressed.

CAPTION: LEAVING THE DELINQUENTS

Panel 5

Felicity (age 18) dancing on a table with a bottle of bourbon in her hand, clearly trashed. You can't see anyone else, except for one girl (who we recognise from the Delinquents photo, probably because of her hair) trying to convince her to get down.

CAPTION: LAST NIGHT

Panel 6

A reminder of what we were looking at at the end of Part 1: Peter's parents dead on their bed.

CAPTION: NOW

PETER (off panel): fuck.

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Panel 1

Felicity and Derek and Peter are looking through the door at the scene beyond. You can see Peter's face, and it looks like he knows what they're seeing, but he's not crying, he's in shock.

There's a sound from upstairs that snaps them back to reality. Felicity and Derek look at each other, a look of panic on their faces.

SFX: **KA-TAAASH! KA-TINK!**

FELICITY: **FUCK!**

DEREK: **FUCK!**

FELICITY: We've gotta fly!

Panel 2

Derek, Felicity and Peter are now running up the stairs. Felicity is now carrying Peter. There are 2 flights of stairs to the top floor.

FELICITY: Can you be brave Peter? Because I need you to be super brave right now, OK?

Panel 3

A closeup of Peter looking over Felicity's shoulder (you can see the back of her head). He's still in shock.

FELICITY: What you just saw, I wish you never had to see that. I saw my dad like that. I wanted to cry. I wanted to **scream**.

Panel 4

Second flight of stairs

FELICITY: When we get you out of here, if you want to cry, or scream, I will hold on to you for as long as you need me to. But until then I need you to be brave, OK?

Panel 5

They arrive in the upstairs room. There is glass on the floor from 2 broken windows. The windows are large, with plenty of room for a body to fly through. Thick blankets have been placed over the window sills to protect them from shards of glass. You can see a ladder leaning against the window sill of one of them. The glow of red outside reminds you that there are firetrucks downstairs.

If you look carefully you can see two sets of cables resting on the window sills, one coming through each of the windows. I'm a bit vague on the details here, but there's probably a thicker cable that splits into several thinner strands with a small carabiner on the end of each. I may need to contact someone in the stunt game to work out what this would look like.

There is a man inside the room with a firefighter's uniform on. The man is JEFF from the Taco Truck. He is the stunt coordinator.

JEFF: Hey kids, I thought you weren't going to show.

FELICITY: I don't think we have much choice.

JEFF: Nope, that's how this game usually works.

Panel 6

Jeff is down on one knee talking to Peter. Peter is standing behind Felicity.

JEFF: So this is the little man causing all the kerfuffle.

JEFF: Hi, I'm Jeff.

PETER: Are you the bad guy?

PAGE 30

Panel 1

Felicity has her hand on Peter's shoulder while addressing Jeff. Jeff looks shocked in a not-very-surprised-actually kind of way.

FELICITY: He's the man who's going to help us get out of here safely, aren't you Jeff?

JEFF: The both of you? Together?

Panel 2

Jeff is standing again. He points out the window. He's not surprised by what Felicity is saying, but he still needs a moment to get his head around it.

JEFF: Out there? Fuck, that's a bad idea.

FELICITY: Got a better one?

Panel 3

Jeff is talking to Derek. Felicity in the background looks pleasantly surprised.

JEFF: What's your role in this? He thinks it's all her.

DEREK: I think we're in it together now.

Panel 4

Jeff is connecting one set of the cables to Felicity's costume. Implied here is that it has a built-in harness. Derek is already done. The cables appear to go up and out the window. He stands with his back to the window so he doesn't get tangled. Peter is standing close to Felicity, watching intently.

JEFF: You know he's going to fucking lose it when I tell him.

DEREK: So don't tell him.

JEFF: And be there when he finds out I didn't? No fucking way. Sorry guys, I've got a job to do, and I'm doing it. The rest is your problem.

Panel 5

Close up on Jeff. You can see he's over it too.

FELICITY (off panel) : You're a "yes" man.

JEFF: Yes ma'am, yes I am.

JEFF (cont): And I'm alive today because I understand the importance of doing what I'm fucking told.

Panel 6

Jeff finishes wiring Felicity in. She is standing with her back to the window and holding Peter again.

JEFF: You could have been one of the best. If you weren't such a fuck up.

FELICITY: Is this a motivational speech?

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Panel 1

Felicity is all wired in, and is standing with her back to the window. She's holding Peter again.

JEFF: There will be a jolt when you first drop...

FELICITY: I know

JEFF: You gotta hold on extra tight--

FELICITY: **I know**, Jeff. I've done this before.

JEFF: Not with a kid, you haven't.

Panel 2

Jeff is now talking directly to Peter. He's looking serious, but supportive.

JEFF: You be brave my man. Felicity is good at this, but you've got to hold on tight OK?

PETER: ok.

JEFF: Good man. We'll make a superhero of you yet. What color suit do you want?

Panel 3

Jeff is climbing out the window, feet first so he can still talk to Peter.

PETER: Green!

JEFF: What's your superpower?

PETER: Truth Bombs!

JEFF: Hit me!

Panel 4

Peter has thrown a pretend truth bomb at Jeff. Jeff is doing a reasonable job imitating Jim Carrey in Liar Liar

PETER: Gotcha! Now you have to tell the truth.

JEFF: I CAN'T LIE!

Panel 5

Close up on Peter

PETER: Did my mom and dad get killed so they couldn't tell the truth about superheroes?

Panel 6

Derek, Jeff and Felicity are looking at each other, mouths agape, shocked, speechless.

JEFF (thought bubble): HOLY...

FELICITY (thought bubble): FUCKING...

DEREK (thought bubble): SHIIIIII-IT!

CHAPTER 7: WHO BELIEVES IN SUPERHEROES?

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Panel 1

Meet JON & JOSEF.

JON is white, in his mid 20's, JOSEF is black, around 15. Jon has long blonde hair, and he's smoking a cigarette throughout the first half of the scene. Josef has short dreadlocks. Both are very fit and good looking guys. They are both wearing T-shirts with pop-culture references on them (TBA).

It's clear from the body language that they are friends, and have a friendly style of banter.

Jon and Josef are outside a hardware store.

SANDWICH BOARD: SORRY, NO WOODEN STAKES

JOSEF: Do you mean vampires in general are bullshit, or the current vampire narrative is bullshit?

JON: Both. But especially the first one. Introducing vampires into the mix was a big blunder. Probably their biggest.

JOSEF: No way. Bug-Man was dumber.

JON: They did a lot of dumb shit in the 60's.

Panel 2

Outside a fruit & veg shop. You can see a string of garlic bulbs hanging over the doorway of the shop. And there is someone reaching up to grab it.

SANDWICH BOARD: SORRY, NO GARLIC

JOSEF: As soon as I heard about Bug-Man I knew superheroes were bullshit. He's the Noah of superheroes.

JON: Granted, the ark story doesn't hold water, but Bug-Man was vaguely plausible. They backed it up with science.

Panel 3

JOSEF: Bullshit science.

JON: High quality bullshit science. It was written into textbooks.

JOSEF: And 35 years later, not a single commercial application of the technology.

JON: It is surprising there aren't more questions about that.

Panel 4

Outside a Quick Stop convenience store. 2 guys stand outside the store who are clearly references to Jay & Silent Bob. You can see the guy from the doorway in the previous panel running past carrying the garlic he stole.

SANDWICH BOARD: SORRY, NO TOILET PAPER

NOT-JAY: RUN YOU GARLIC STEALIN' MUTHFUKKA!

JOSEF: Why isn't someone making millions selling industrial shrinkers, and office shrinkers, and fucking domestic shrinkers. Why aren't we all shrinking our excess shit instead of paying for storage containers? Fuck, we should be living in miniturised communities to lighten our footprint on the Earth.

JON: That'd make a good movie.

JOSEF: Probably not.

Panel 5

JON: So you hate scientific explanations for super powers but you're OK with vampires?

JOSEF: No. Vampires are bullshit. But at least they haven't tried to sell us vamp-science. They call it an act of God, and wave it off.

Panel 6

JOSEF: I just wish they could be more consistent with their bullshit.

JON: Verisimilitude.

JOSEF: Great word. What's it mean?

JON: Plausibly ludicrous.

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Panel 1

Jon and Josef arrive at the door of a comic book store. It's called Comicology. Jon is finishing his cigarette, so they stay outside and talk. There's a sign on the door that says "Vampires Not Welcome. People Are". Another sign says "Close Door Gently. It Slams."

JON: What about the exponential problem?

JOSEF: OK, I'll bite, what's the exponential problem?

JON: Vampires make vampires right?

JOSEF: Only if they choose to. The victim has to feed back to be turned.

JON: But if you had the option to make more vampires, why the fuck wouldn't you? Why would vampires ever need to be an endangered species?

Panel 2

JON: If a vampire hunter starts taking out your army of the undead, make more soldiers. He can't kill them all, I don't care how many silver spikes he's packing.

JON: Eventually fatigue will kick in, and he'll get fucked up.

JOSEF: Big hole in the plot, definitely.

JON: It's an indictment on the state of math literacy in America.

Panel 3

JOSEF: If they each feed once a day, and everyone who got bitten turned, that'd be like total wipeout in...

JON: About 33 days.

JOSEF: Fuck. We should be in total lockdown with the army on the streets.

JON: Exactly, the narrative makes no sense.

Panel 4

JON: There's too much fucking noise.

JOSEF: We're in New Jersey.

JON: I mean the signal to noise ratio is too low.

Panel 5

JOSEF: And that means?

JON: There's something brewing.

JOSEF: Something super?

JON: Something super fake.

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Panel 1

JOSEF: So the earliest references to Vampires are from the 1600's right?

JON: Yeah, but they retconned the story to say Judas was the first vampire. Turned by Satan when he tried to kill himself after betraying Jesus.

JOSEF: Ignore that bit. So how often would each vampire have to feed for us to make it to the year 2000?

Panel 2

JON: You can't ignore that bit. You need an origin story. There has to be a first vampire.

JOSEF: Ignore it for now. How often?

JON: Um, so 33 doublings across 400 years is about... once every 12 years.

JOSEF: Perfect, hear me out. Movie pitch...FINAL FRENZY (A VAMPIRE MOVIE)

DELETED SCENE: FINAL FRENZY (A VAMPIRE MOVIE)

Panel 3

Jon and Josef are now inside the comic store. We see Jon and Josef walking through the comic book store toward the back.

CAPTION: A little later...

JON: Boom! There's your sequel.

JOSEF: Final Frenzy 2: Revenge of the Cows.

JON: You've really got to start writing this shit down.

DELETED SCENE: PART OF A BIGGER UNIVERSE

Panel 2

They walk past the counter. The guy behind the counter is obviously a reference to the comic store guy from the Simpsons (but he also looks a bit like Kevin Smith). He's pointing at a sign on the counter.

SIGN: Please refrain from discussing conspiracy theories in the store. Thank you.

JOSEF: The Protocols of the Elders of Zion are a fraud, but the Elders of Zion probably existed in some form.

JON: Don't you go nazi on me man. You know how I feel about nazis.

JOSEF: I fucking hate nazis. And snakes.

Panel 3

Jon and Josef have arrived in the back room. It's quite big. It's the stock room so there are boxes everywhere, and lots of piles of comics, and posters on the wall (Lots of Easter Eggs, go nuts). It's an organized mess. In the middle, there's a round table with a tabletop board game set up and ready to play. Probably superhero-themed. There are lots of snacks on the table.

8 men are already sitting around it, ranging in ages from late teens to mid 40's, and ranging across the spectrum from incredibly nerdy (use ALL the stereotypes), to just very slightly nerdy (must be in an ill-fitting business suit, tie off). They've all stopped talking and have turned to look at the new arrivals, who were clearly expected and welcome. Two chairs are empty. They are either side of what is obviously the game master's chair (better chair, gamebooks and dice and other game stuff on the table).

The guy in the game master chair is a fit young man with an audacious beard, called ALLEN.

ALLEN: Hi Jon, Hi Josef.

JOSEF: Hi Allen, hi guys.

SOMEONE: Hi.

SOMEONE: Hello.

SOMEONE: Welcome!

SOMEONE: About time.

ALLEN: Gentlemen, are we ready?

Panel 4

Focus on Jon, Josef, and Allen. Allen is in the game master chair, Jon to his right and Joseph to his left.

JON: What do we know about the current Vampire narrative?

ALLEN: Looks like this one was **unplanned**.

JOSEPH: Oooh tell me more!

DELETED SCENE: THE CONSPIRACY REALISTS

Page 35

Panel 1

Close up on Allen. He looks like a wise old wizard, only he's not old.

CAPTION: A little later...

ALLEN: I think he dropped the vampire rumors because he knew his listeners would spread them, and he wanted the narrative to get out of control.

JOSEF (off panel): Why?

ALLEN: Because he knew that would force a response from the *Hero Complex*. I think he's pushing someone's buttons. I think he's saying "I know what you're up to."

Panel 2

Wider shot to include one of the other players . Some time has passed and most people are bored. Eric has a photo on the table in front of him. If you look closely, it looks a bit like Sepp in a truckers cap and sunglasses.

JON: Nice theory Allen. Comprehensive, coherent, logical... ish, and totally useless. Anyone got anything supported by evidence?

ERIC: Yeah I got something.

Panel 2

Close up on the photo, Jon's POV. It's definitely Sepp, wearing the same clothes he had on when he was at the meeting with Rudy (DELETED SCENE). Photo obviously taken from a distance.

ERIC (off panel): I was staking out the *Hero Complex* on my lunch break and I saw him leaving the building.

JON (off panel): Should I know who this is?

Panel 3

Close up on the photo, It's definitely Sepp. Photo obviously taken from a distance.

ERIC: This is Sepp Weedling. When I knew him he was a writer on a shitty sitcom. But he was pitching this weird schoolgirl fetish vampire movie all over Hollywood. He thought he was the next Spielberg. Then he just disappeared.

JON: You know him?

ERIC: Well enough to race across 4 lanes of traffic so I could accidentally bump into him.

JON: And?

Panel 4

Close on Eric.

ERIC: Sketchy as fuck. Pretended not to know me, then kept looking at these 2 guys nervously.

JON (off panel): Security?

ERIC: Suits. We were away from the entrance. No cameras. I wore a fake mustache.

ERIC: So I persisted, and I reminded him of all the times we went out chasing pussy together, because that was his thing, he was all about the pussy, never shut up about it.

Panel 5

Close on Jon looking excited.

ERIC (off panel): And then he slipped up. He said, and I quote:

ERIC (off panel): "I've got this vampire thing to deal with, I'll be free after tomorrow night."

JON: It's going down tomorrow. We need to find out where.

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Panel 1

Wider shot of the whole table. It shows that the game has been mostly packed up, and people are getting ready to leave.

CAPTION: A little later...

JON: Any other business?

JOSEF: Yes.

Panel 2

Close in on Josef and Jon.

JOSEF: We sit here every week. We conspire, we plan, we plot. We're a group of men meeting in secret and making plans to take power from someone. We are in a conspiracy. We are conspirators.

JON: What's your point?

JOSEF: How do we know we're the good guys?

Panel 3

Close on Jon and Allen.

JON: Of course we're the good guys, what sort of question is that?

ALLEN: It's a valid question. We should always be open to questions about ourselves, and our motivations. If power is built on lies, revolutions are built on honesty.

Panel 4

Allen is passionate, speaking from the heart.

ALLEN: We know we're the good guys because we're not fighting for ourselves. We fight for the weak and powerless.

SOMEONE (off panel): Like us?

ALLEN: Well yes, but we're not doing it **for us**. We're doing this for **democracy**. We're doing this for truth, justice, and a **better** American way. An America without the lies, without the racketeering, without the corruption and the killing. Without...

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Panel 1

Zoom back a bit. Jon has taken over, and all eyes are on him. Allen looks a bit hurt that Jon has stolen his limelight.

JON: Don't believe what you read about us in the press.

JON: We are not mad. We are not paranoid, or delusional, or deranged. We are not unstable or confused or unhinged.

Panel 2

Jon is standing. He's really getting into it now!

JON: **We are not the brainwashed ones!**

JON: We are the ones who see what's really going on. We see the strings on the Superhero puppets. And we see the shadowy puppeteers, hiding behind the curtains. We see the smoke and the mirrors, the distractions and misdirections.

Panel 3

This is his Braveheart moment...

JON: We are not conspiracy theorists. We are conspiracy **realists**.

JON (cont): **Have no doubt that we are the good guys...**

JON (cont): **...AND WE WILL HAVE OUR DAY!**

Panel 4

Wide shot of everyone, standing, some with fists raised in the air, someone wiping a tear from their eye.

ALL: **HUZZAH!**

PANEL 5

Change of angle so you see Comic Store Guy standing at the door.

COMIC STORE GUY: Keep it down please, or you will have to find somewhere else to plan your revolution.

CHAPTER 8: SHOW TIME!

PAGE 38

Panel 1

Felicity and Derek are sitting on their windowsills waiting for the moment. Felicity is holding tight to Peter who has his legs and arms tightly around her.

FELICITY: Hang on, how the fuck am I supposed to be able to fly?

DEREK: With the wire attached to your harness.

FELICITY: No, I mean in the story. I'm The CopyCat... my power is copying superpowers, which is, I might add, such a fucking cop out. He thinks he's king shit of the writers room, but his stuff fucking sucks worse than a sitcom with a laugh track.

Panel 2

DEREK: Do you have a point, this could happen any second.

FELICITY: You have a set of mechanical wings. How does my super-mimicry mimic a mechanical contraption?

Panel 3

Derek offers only a shrug.

DEREK: Bit late for plot holes.

FELICITY: This whole fucking thing is a plot hole.

DEREK: We did hear the siren didn't we?

PETER: That was the 5 minute warning. Weren't you listening?

Panel 4

CAPTION: A little later...

FELICITY: I'm kinda glad you knew the truth before you saw all of this, Peter. Because the harness woulda been kinda hard to explain.

PETER: I didn't want to know. I love superheroes. I love you Eagle-Man.

DEREK: I love you too, my man.

PETER: You're not very good, but you always fight fair.

Panel 5

Felicity is looking at her watch. Impatient.

CAPTION: A little later...

PETER: ...but then mom said I had to understand that all adults are liars. That's why they told me. I didn't want to know.

FELICITY: I get it, like when I was a kid and I worked out Santa wasn't real, but I really wanted to still believe it was true.

Panel 6

Felicity is mortified.

PETER: Not Santa too!?

FELICITY: Oh shit Peter! I'm so sorry.

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Panel 1-?

Felicity's train of thought that led from that page to the next page told across a series of panels with multiple thought bubbles, and her facial expressions telling the story of her cringing anguish.

CAPTION: Seconds later...

FELICITY (thought bubbles):

Oh my god I can't believe I just did that! ...

I could just die! ...

I should die ...

I should just kill myself ...

Just drive a stake through my heart right now ...

I wish I had one on me ...

We should have stakes ...

Hang on a fuckin' second!

Last panel

FELICITY (out loud): Why would we chase a fucking vampire without stakes!?

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Panel 1

DEREK: No need, they're not real vampires, remember?

FELICITY: But we didn't know that until I found him. We went searching on the assumption that we were hunting vampires. Seems pretty dumb to hunt vamps without vamp-killing weapons of some sort.

DEREK: Agreed.

Panel 2

FELICITY: So we've got no weapons. My ability to copy superpowers is redundant because the villain has none, unless you call chemistry a superpower which I guess it is in a way but not in the way that's meant by this shitty fuckin' plot-hole-infested fucking shitshow.

FELICITY: So basically I'm just a girl in a catsuit bouncing around the room avoiding being hit while you do what exactly? Beat him with your shield?

Panel 3

Close on Derek, complete fear.

DEREK: FUCK! I forgot my shield!

FELICITY: Oh yeah, I saw that downstairs.

DEREK: He'll kill me.

FELICITY: You're already dead.

Panel 4

Close up on Felicity. Her eyes are like dishes.

FELICITY: Have you got any gum?

Panel 5

Felicity and Derek are pulled backwards through the window. FAST! The mechanics of the wire system are a bit vague, but the fire trucks outside are part of it. The wire is controlled from the ground, it goes up to the top of the ladder, through some sort of pulley, and then to the heroes. One ladder per hero so they don't get tangled. The initial movement is to pull them out the window and up, then they are lowered to the ground as though they are flying.

But the reader has to infer this from the info given so far. All you really see are whoosh marks and feet flying out the window.

SFX: YOINK!

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Panel 1

We're in a New York yellow cab. Jon is driving, and Josef is in the passenger seat. Depending on the angle of the shot, you can see Jon's taxi driver's license, which has a clean-shaven, younger-looking Jon, and the name "Jon Jameson". There's probably a takeaway coffee in the drink holder. You will also sometimes see a CB radio (it's 1999).

CAPTION: 4 hours earlier

JON: OK, list the superhero categories in order of plausibility.

JOSEF: Least to most or most to least?

JON: Least to most.

Panel 2

Jon looks incredulous.

JOSEF: Radioactives, Mutants, Super Soldiers, Tech Enhanced, Vampires, Martial Artists, Witches & Wizards, Gods & Demons, Super-Spies, and Aliens.

JON: OK, what's your beef with radiation?

Panel 3

Close up on Josef

JOSEF: We've had what, 26 radioactive superheroes? And countless super villains. They've all allegedly been exposed to dangerous levels of various forms of radiation, and they all come out on top.

JON: Some come out pretty fucked up.

JOSEF: But they live, and they get powers. Not a single story about a scientist getting zapped and developing cancer. It's all super strength and sticky fingers, but no tumors.

JOSEF: What are the odds of that?

Panel 4

JON: There's a lot of scientists in a lot of labs. Maybe we only hear about the lucky accidents. Maybe radioactive superheroes are real, and the conspiracy is the coverup of millions of dead scientists.

JOSEF: That's a massive occupational safety failure.

JON: And that's exactly the sort of thing that the Government would try to keep quiet.

JOSEF: There are dumber theories out there.

CB RADIO: noita srevnoc ro serut cip tuoh...

Panel 5

They both stop to listen.

CB RADIO: ...tiw ecila thgu oht koob afo esu eht si tahwd na.

JON: I think we're on.

JOSEF: You understood that?

JON: You develop an ear for it.

Panel 6

Josef looks at Jon.

JOSEF: What've we got?

JON: They've evacuated a Manhattan city block for a gas leak.

JOSEF: Could just be a gas leak?

JON: It's never just a gas leak. Not when there's a taco truck on the scene.

DELETED SCENE: THE TAXI RIDE OF DESTINY

PAGE 42

Panel 1

In a large panel we see an exterior view of Felicity and Derek flying out the window. We are looking directly up from street level. You can now see how the fire engine ladders are being used both as the support structure for the cables holding them up, and to make visibility difficult for outsiders. There's a pyramid of ladders, with big spotlights strategically placed pointing outwards, so the inside of the pyramid is virtually invisible. Unless you happen to be looking directly up at it from below.

SFX: YOINK!

Panel 2

Inside the Taco Truck. Jeff is speaking into a microphone on the console in front of him. Sepp is lurking over his shoulder. Sophie is standing well out of the way, trying to be invisible.

JEFF: Betsy there's an extra body in the air, OK? A small boy. You're going to have to improvise.

Panel 4

View of Betsy from the camera's perspective. You can't make out details in the background.

BETSY: Oh come on! What the fuck?

Panel 5

Betsy straightens her hair and brings the mike up to her face while Jeff continues in her earpiece.

JEFF: Stand by Betsy. Boom time in 2 minutes.

Page 43

Panel 1

Back in the taco truck, Sepp is lunging towards the control panel. Jeff has his back to Sepp, his head turning to see what's happening.

SEPP: I'll show her who runs the fucking show!

Panel 2

Jeff is trying to stop Sepp from getting to the control panel. Sepp is determined, and Jeff was caught off guard.

JEFF: NO SEPP! NO!

Panel 3

Fighting continues, Sepp has the momentum in his favor.

SEPP: Get out of my fucking way!

Panel 4

Sepp's hand is about to push the button. There's a hand-written label underneath.

LABEL: JEFF'S BIG BOOM BUTTON. DO NOT TOUCH!

PAGE 44

Panel 1

Jon & Josef are still in the taxi.

CAPTION: 1 hour earlier

JOSEF: How many laps do you think we can do before someone notices.

JON: About 5 less than we've done.

JOSEF: We've been seen?

JON: 'Fraid so.

Panel 2

Close up on Jon. He looks scared.

JOSEF: Why the fuck are we still here then!?

JON: Collecting evidence.

JOSEF: Evidence for them to use at our trial?

Panel 3

Jon points to his dashcam, which hopefully was there in the earlier scene. Jon is unusually calm, Josef is definitely not.

JOSEF: FUCK FUCK FUCKING FUCK WE'RE FUCKED!

JON: Don't panic. They can't touch us.

JOSEF: YOU WANNA FUCKING BET?

Panel 4

Close up on Josef. He's scared.

JOSEF: This is fucked man. You're fucked. I'm fucked. The mission is fucked.

JOSEF: MY DAD IS GONNA FUCKING KILL ME.

JOSEF: And then the government will.

Panel 5

JON: When you get questioned...

JOSEF: WHEN!?

JON: Oh you'll be questioned for sure. When you are being questioned

JON: ...just remember the Prisoner's Dilemma

JOSEF: How does that get you out of trouble?

JON: It doesn't. It keeps you out of it.

PAGE 45

Panel 1

Felicity, Derek and Peter are in the air, but stationary, high above the street. They are a safe distance apart, so they need to yell at each other to be heard.

FELICITY: OH MAN, I'M FLYING!

DEREK: I KNOW, RIGHT?! IT'S STILL RUSH!

FELICITY: NO I MEAN THAT PILL SOPHIE GAVE ME!

FELICITY: IT KICKED IN.

FELICITY: I'M FUCKING FLYING MAN!

Panel 2

Back to Betsy, you can see Jim on camera, Betsy in frame, and a massive explosion behind her.

BETSY: I'm at the scene of yet another Manhattan gas leak...

Panel 3

The explosion dominates the frame. Betsy is terrified.

SFX: **BOOOOOM!**

BETSY: **FUCK ME!**

BETSY: **We weren't late. That was fucking early.**

Panel 4

Jon and Josef looking out the front of the taxi. They are stunned. Their faces are lit up with the blinding light of a massive explosion.

SFX: **BOOOOOM!**

JON & JOSEF: **FUCK!**

JON & JOSEF: **What the fuck was that?**

Panel 5

Inside the Taco truck. Jeff looks horrified. Sophie looks terrified. Sepp looks apoplectic.

SFX (from outside): **BOOOOM!**

JEFF: **FUCKING FUCK!**

JEFF: **THEY'RE STILL IN THE FUCKING AIR!**

SEPP: **I FUCKING WARNED HER!**

JEFF: **YOU MAY HAVE JUST FUCKING KILLED HER!**

Page 46

Panel 1

Felicity and Derek are about halfway down to the ground (started on the 5th floor)

A MASSIVE explosion goes off on the floor above them. It's a Hollywood explosion: more pyrotechnics than explosives, but there's still a really loud bang, a lot of smoke, and a massive fireball.

The plume of fire and smoke almost envelopes Felicity, Derek, and Peter. Felicity's wig and mask fall off. Derek is facing away from us, ass-up in the air.

SFX: **BOOOOOM!**

PETER: **AAIIIEEEEEEE....**

FELICITY: **CU...**

Panel 2

Peter screams in fright and puts his hands over his ears, so he is no longer holding on to Felicity. Peter slips out of Felicity's grasp.

FELICITY: **...NTS!**

PETER: **EEEEEEE...**

Panel 3

Derek shits his pants.

SFX: **BRRRRAAAAAAAAAPPPPP!**

DEREK: **Unghhh!**

Panel 4

Final image is Felicity looking terrified as Peter slips away from her. Derek is visible in the background. They are both upside down, arms outstretched, looking very little like actual superheroes. Also, one of them is a cat, which obviously makes no sense at all. Peter is falling feet first with his back to us, reaching up to Felicity, but obviously out of her reach.

FELICITY & DEREK: **PETER!**

PETER: ...**EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE**...

DELETED SCENE: THE TAXI RIDE OF DESTINY II

CHAPTER 9: HITTING THE GROUND

PAGE 47

Panel 1

From Felicity's POV, we can see Peter falling from a great height. He's scared, but there's a hint of a smile on his face. Below him, we can see a big, blue crash mat.

PETER: ...**EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE**

Panel 2

Peter being engulfed by the crash mat, a look of pure joy on his face.

SFX: **WHUMPF!**

Page 48

Panel 1

Betsy is turning away the camera and holding one hand to her ear, so she can hear through her earpiece. You can see that the building in the background is on fire.

BETSY: **What the fuck is going on up there?** I was on cue, the blast was early.

JEFF (on radio): Sorry Betsy, things have gone a bit tits up.

BETSY: The footage is ruined.

JEFF: Don't worry, you are a **loooong** way down the list of people to blame for this fubar.

Panel 2

Inside the Taco Truck. Jeff is talking on the radio again. Sepp is storming out.

JEFF: Just cover your ass.

BETSY (on radio): How?

JEFF: Improvise, Betsy. The scene is a city street, there's been a massive explosion, and you're a reporter. GO!

Panel 3

Betsy is walking towards the action. Jim is close behind with his camera. Fireman 2 is waiting ready to deliver his lines.

FIREFIGHTER 2: Would you please step back ma'am, you are not allowed in here.

BETSY: People have a right to know what's going on.

FIREFIGHTER 2: As soon as we know, we'll tell you, now please move back. It is not safe here.

Panel 4

Betsy and Firefighter 2 are on camera. Firefighter 2 looks confused.

BETSY: Is the child safe?

FIREFIGHTER 2: What?

BETSY: I saw two superheroes fly out of that building just before the explosion, and one of them was carrying a child.

FIREFIGHTER 2: This isn't in the script. I've only got 2 lines, and that was them.

Panel 5

Betsy is still in reporter mode. Microphone up, camera rolling.

BETSY: Just improvise. We'll go again.

BESTY: Is the child safe?

FIREFIGHTER 2: Improvisin's above my pay grade. I was told to stick to the script.

Panel 6

Betsy is angry. Firefighter 2 is having none of it.

BETSY: FUCKING IMPROVISE!

FIREFIGHTER 2: STICK TO FUCKING THE SCRIPT!

PAGE 49

Panel 1

Felicity and Derek are nearly on the mat. Felicity looks like a cat coming into land - feet and hands down ready for landing, head up. Derek is upside down and his wings are tangled in his wires. Possibly some little gas waft lines coming from his bum to remind people that he shat himself. Peter is visible on the mat wide-eyed and pumped up on adrenaline.

PETER: **THAT WAS AWESOME!**

FELICITY: Are you OK?

Panel 2

Felicity hugs Peter while Derek lands with very little dignity.

PETER: Did you see me fly? I flew like a superhero and I was brave! I want to be a superhero like you!

FELICITY: It's not as much fun as it seems.

Panel 3

Sepp has arrived at the landing site, along with Sophie who is in the background. Felicity and Derek are climbing off the mats now, the wires have been removed and Derek is moving towards Sepp, who has eyes only for Felicity and Peter. Peter is back in Felicity's arms, holding her tight. Felicity is also holding her mask and wig. 2 police officers are heading their way.

PETER: Is that the bad man?

FELICITY: Yes it is, Peter.

Panel 4

Derek punches Sepp hard in the stomach. Sepp is buckled over, the wind is knocked out of him.

DEREK: You fucking prick! You could have killed us.

SEPP: **Ooofffuurrrggghh!**

PAGE 50

Panel 1

The police officers have arrived and are looking at Felicity. Cop 4 is the one who claimed to have shot Derek earlier. Sepp is still winded in the background.

COP 4: Hand over the boy please ma'am.

FELICITY: Not on your life. Peter stays with me until I know exactly whose custody he is going into.

COP 4: He's going into **my** custody, ma'am, and that's all you need to know.

Panel 2

Cop 4 reaches for Peter. Felicity turned away so he couldn't grab him.

FELICITY: Don't you touch him.

COP 3: We don't want any trouble ma'am.

Panel 3

Cop 4 has grabbed Felicity's shoulders from behind. Cop 3 and Sepp are close behind him, to his right. Felicity looks fierce. She's still holding Peter, and her wig.

FELICITY: I SAID **DON'T!**

Panel 4

Felicity kicks Cop 4 in the balls. He buckles over. Cop 3 is making a move for Felicity. She's still holding Peter, and her wig.

COP 4: **Ooooooooooooooooooooouuuuuuck!**

Panel 5

Felicity kicks Cop 3 in the balls, Cop 4 is on the ground. She's still holding Peter, and her wig.

COP 3: **Ooooooooooooooooooooouuuuuuck!**

COP 4: Jesus... fucking... bitch...

Panel 6

Felicity has turned to Sepp and is pointing up. Sepp is looking where she's pointing. She's still holding Peter, and her wig. Cop 3 & Cop 4 are on the ground.

COP 4: ...whore...cu...

COP 3: Officers down!

PAGE 51

Panel 1

In a big splashy panel, Felicity kicks Sepp in the balls, really hard. Her form is awesome. She's still holding Peter, and her wig.

SEPP: **OOOOOOOONNNNNNGGGGGGFFFFFFFFFUUUUUUCK!**

Panel 2

Felicity turns and walks away from the scene. She's still holding Peter. She's defiant. Behind her, you can see the 3 men on the ground, but Cop 4 has drawn his gun. Sophie is standing directly in the line of fire looking at him.

SOPHIE: Donchu fuckin' dare!

Panel 3

Felicity continues on as a second explosion - not as big as the first, but big enough to generate a fireball - rings out behind them. Felicity is unfazed. Like a boss.

SFX: **BOOOOOOM!**

Panel 4

Betsy and Jim have made their way closer to the action, and are in the perfect position to see everything that just happened. You can see that Felicity has just walked past them, and you can see Peter's face over their shoulders. He's beaming.

BETSY (whispering): Tell me you got all that.

JIM (whispering): I got it.

BETSY (whispering): I'm going to need a copy.

Panel 5

Close on Betsy and Jim.

JIM (whispering): Be careful Betsy.

BETSY: I always am, Jim. That's my problem.

CHAPTER 10: CRISIS MANAGEMENT

PAGE 52

Panel 1

Sepp is standing, but obviously still in a lot of pain. He is looking at Derek, who is stifling a smile.

SEPP: Get the fuck out there and talk to the fucking reporter so we can salvage something from this fucking disaster for the morning news.

DEREK: What's the story?

Panel 2

SEPP: The CopyCat is the criminal. She kidnapped the kid.

DEREK: Interesting interpretation.

Panel 3

DEREK: So I'm facing the media after failing to rescue a kid from a girl in a catsuit.

SEPP: She copied your powers.

DEREK: I don't have powers. I have a mechanical contraption.

Panel 4

Sepp is furious.

SEPP: Fucking **improvise!** And it better be good or you'll be fucked too.

DEREK: I think I'm fucked either way.

Panel 5

Focus on Sophie who is walking away from the scene. She does not turn around. Sepp is in the background, holding his aching balls.

SEPP: Sophie! Get me some ice.

Panel 6

Close up on Sophie. Utter disdain on her face.

SOPHIE: **Get it y'self ya gormless coffwaffle!**

PAGE 53

Panel 1

Jon and Josef are still in shock. Jon notices something off-panel and begins furiously pushing Josef out the door.

JOSEF: Holy fucking shit!

JON: Get out! Quick!

JOSEF: Huh?! What?

Panel 2

Through the windscreen you can see Felicity is pushing past bystanders and cops alike as she approaches and waves for a taxi.

JOSEF (off panel) What the fu...

JON: Prisoner's Delemma. Don't fuck this up.

FELICITY: Taxi!

Panel 3

Outside the cab. Felicity is standing on the roadside, hailing a Taxi. Some bystanders at the back of the crowd see her.

FELICITY: TAXI!

BYSTANDER 8: Who's that?

BYSTANDER 9: Never seen her. She's hot though.

BYSTANDER 8: Why's she gettin' a cab?

BYSTANDER 9: Can't fly obviously. An account of the kid.

BYSTANDER 9: Union rules.

Panel 4

Felicity and Peter climb into the back of Jon's taxi. View from Jon's POV.

JON (off panel): Going to a costume party?

FELICITY: Um, yeah, something like that.

Panel 5

They pull out into traffic and begin driving. Jon is a bit too excited, and he's trying to act cool. He's failing.

JON: Where to?

FELICITY: 30 Rock...

JON: THE HERO COMPLEX!?

FELICITY: ...efeller Plaza. Um, yeah.

JON: Well that explains the awesome costume.

Panel 6

Front view so you can see John and Felicity clearly, Peter is mostly obscured.

JON: So, um, are you a **real** superhero?

FELICITY: Real? No. Definitely not.

PETER: It's all bullshit.

PAGE 54

Panel 1

A wider view with Felicity and Peter included. Jon is very excited, Felicity is calm, and Peter is falling asleep with his head on her lap.

JON: I knew it! I knew it! The moment I saw you I knew it.

JON: The kid threw me a bit, but I knew it.

FELICITY: The kid threw everyone.

Panel 2

A close up of Felicity as she looks out the window contemplative.

FELICITY: It's an enormous tower of bullshit, filled with people who are full of bullshit, spewing endless streams of bullshit into the world. I hate everything about it, and almost everyone in it.

Panel 3

FELICITY: I want to see it burn to the ground.

Panel 4

Jon has stopped the car and is draping his arm over the back of his seat to talk to Felicity.

JON: Maybe I can help you with that?

Panel 5

Wider shot so you can see both of them, but more of Felicity.

FELICITY: I really shouldn't be talking about this.

JON: I already know.

FELICITY: Then you know that this is a dangerous game.

JON: Danger is my middle name.

Panel 6

Focus on Jon, he's cringing.

JON: I wish I hadn't said that.

FELICITY: I'll do you a deal, you don't tell anyone that I revealed classified information, and I won't tell anyone that you're a huge dork.

PAGE 55

Panel 1

Wider shot so you can see both of them, but more of Felicity.

CAPTION: A little later...

JON: So let me get this straight. You were in a staged superhero op tonight.

FELICITY: Yep.

Panel 2

Jon is way too excited.

JON: And it all went horribly wrong.

FELICITY: Total fuck up.

Panel 3

JON: But you saved this kid's life. For **real**.

FELICITY: His name's Peter. Peter Parkinson. And yes I did.

Panel 4

Felicity manages her first smile in a while.

JON: And you kicked a cop in the balls.

FELICITY: 2 cops. And the director.

Panel 5

Jon has love eyes for Felicity.

JON: You're my hero.

Panel 6

Jon has resumed driving but continues to talk to Felicity.

JON: I have some friends who would very much like to meet you.

JON: We're gonna expose this whole thing. But first we need to get you to safety.

PAGE 56

Panel 1

FELICITY: Safest place for me is inside the Complex.

JON: That can't be true?

Panel 2

FELICITY: Out here, I'm AWOL. And I'm fair game. In there, something resembling due process happens. It may be top secret, but it's still the government.

JON: Will you be punished?

Panel 3

FELICITY: Oh yes. I'm fucked.

JON: So run away with me.

FELICITY: They'll find us.

JON: I'll protect you.

FELICITY: They'll kill you too.

Panel 4

FELICITY: Right now, you are an innocent taxi driver who knows nothing. As soon as we run, you're an accessory.

JON: We were circling the block all afternoon. No one is going to believe I'm innocent.

FELICITY: Ah, well, your choices are limited, like mine.

Panel 5

JON: I've got evidence. With my video and your story, we can blow this thing up right now.

FELICITY: They've got a room full of Narrative Managers already filling the media with bullshit. We can't compete.

JON: But we're telling THE TRUTH.

FELICITY: It doesn't matter.

Panel 6

Jon looks out the window at The Hero Complex building.

JON: You sure you want to go into the belly of the beast?

FELICITY: I have no choice.

PAGE 57

Panel 1

JON: I'm fucked, aren't I?

FELICITY: Destroy your camera. Plead ignorance. Deny everything. And you might get away with it. But I doubt it.

Panel 2

In a large splashy panel, the view is from ground level, with the taxi in the foreground, and the building towering above the street. This is the first glimpse of The Hero Complex. It looks MASSIVE. And very phallic.

The building is the real 30 Rockefeller Plaza (66 stories), with an obvious extension built on top (taking it to 101 stories), which makes it look even more like a dick.

There's a BSA (Bureau of Superhuman Affairs) logo out front of the building, it's very similar to the CIA logo.

Felicity is now standing on the curb with Peter in her arms. Jon is hanging out his car window as he talks to her.

JON: I really hope that I see you again.

FELICITY: Be careful what you wish for.

Panel 3

Felicity walks through the door of the Hero Complex, holding Peter. There's an obvious security presence.

Above the entrance door is "The Wisdom frieze" (exactly as it is in the real building) that reads:

"WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE SHALL BE THE STABILITY OF THY TIMES"

Panel 4

Overhead view of cops surrounding Jon's taxi.

JON (inside taxi): Good evening gentlemen. I am not resisting. I will cooperate with your enquiries. Could you please put the guns away.

END OF PART 2