

Galactic Hawk Vol. 28, Finale

by Anna Hajek

I've got him in a tight grip. He struggles to break free, but his efforts are futile. He is pinned on the ground with my entire super-human bodily force keeping him from doing anything but wiggling like a worm caught under a rock. The cameras and reporters swarm around me once again, just as they had done for every other villain I've stopped. The bystanders congeal in a circle around me and the reporters, giving me encouraging cheers. I've been after this guy for so long. He's the Joker to my Batman, the Lex Luthor to my Superman. Finally, his time has come. There's nowhere for him to run anymore. The special task force closes in on us, ready at any moment to pounce should the villain somehow break free. However, thanks to the lavender power crystal attached on a string around my neck hidden beneath my suit, I know that their help is not needed.

"Seems I've finally lost to you, Galactic Hawk," the villain sneers with a smile under my grasp. His yellow eyes are squinted at mine, and his slick black hair is popping out in places from the intensive brawl we had just moments before. "It only took you seven years." He continues to reach for the syringe filled with a sinister clear liquid I knocked away from him earlier in the fight, but his attempts are only halfhearted. He knows it's over. However, despite his struggling, he is unnervingly calm, almost as if he was somehow in control of the situation.

"Oh, give it a rest Crimson Katana," I say heroically, in a deep booming voice, followed by some 'oohs' and 'ahhs' from the women of the crowd. "Do you have any last words before

you're thrown in a cell to rot for the rest of your days?" That line is one of my favorites, and I've been waiting a long time to use it on my arch nemesis.

"A cell?" he inquires. "Now why would I be arrested for curing cancer?" A hush falls over the once ballistic crowd. There is a split second of chilling silence, which is followed up by murmurs and whispers.

"What?" I ask. "No. This is another one of your tricks." He smiles manically, the corners of his lips curving upwards like the Grinch getting ready to steal Christmas. The crowd begins to destabilize; after all, they're starting to wonder who is really in the right. Some are cheering for me, begging me to turn him over to the cops and put him in villain containment, while others are asking to let Katana speak.

"No!" he insists, still calm and collected. "It's in that syringe, right there." He turns his head as much as he could toward the task force standing cautiously behind their clear shields. "You can test its contents in a lab if you'd like." One of the members steps forward and procures a small plastic bag from his belt pouch. Skeptically, he slowly picks up the syringe and places it in the bag, then seals it shut. He puts the bag in a jacket pocket and returns the group of his peers.

"What are you doing?" I assert. "This man has caused this great city so much grief in the past seven years and you're just going to believe him? What if that serum is deadly or contagious? Arrest him now!" The force hesitantly comes up to me and suppress the villain, though at this point Katana is willingly going with them. Something about this situation is not right, but unfortunately my crystal did not give me the power to see through the plots of villains.

The crowd's murmurs have turned into an audible mass of conversations. I can't tell if they're happy or angry, or at who they're directing their feelings.

The villain is tucked into a specialized villain containment vehicle, where their powers, if any, are rendered useless. As always, the police pause for a moment as they bend the villain's head into the car, giving him a few last words that usually consist of 'I'll be back!' or 'You'll be sorry!' or some empty promise like that. However, as the police granted him his chance to give me a piece of his mind, he simply made eye contact with me and smiled. He opened his mouth to speak, but instead of making noise, he mouthed one word.

"Checkmate."

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It's been three months since that happened, but you'd be amazed at how time flies. I keep replaying that scene in my head, wondering over and over again what I could have done to prevent this outcome, analyzing every move I made, every word I said, down to every breath I took. After all, there's not much else you can do but think in these cold cells. That and watch the live world feed on a small screen located in each cell, but after a while even watching that was too much.

After the arrest of Crimson Katana, the labs got to work on dissecting and studying the alleged cancer curing serum. It turns out, Katana wasn't lying. Within 36 hours the labs reported that indeed the serum had cancer curing properties. They tested it on a volunteer and sure

enough, it worked. Once everyone realized I was the guy who arrested the one who cured cancer, one could see why the public reacted as negatively toward me as they did. Katana was released, I was ridiculed, and that was the beginning of the end.

Katana began producing the serum in mass quantities and he became an instant fan favorite. It's amazing how people forget about everything that man had done to them. He destroyed a skyscraper, killing hundreds of people. He nearly assassinated the mayor twice. He burned three parks and blew up an entire neighborhood, all among many other small, evil deeds. But it was as if a switch was flipped, and everything he had ever done was negated because he found the cure to cancer.

It didn't take long for myself to get arrested, under the charge of "destroying the peace." Just as the people has forgotten all the bad things Katana did, so too did they forget all the good I, Galactic Hawk, did for them over the years. As they took me in they confiscated my power crystal and gave it to Katana as a trophy, which only egged him on further. With me in containment next to everyone else I defeated, the power crystal in his hands, and a loving and dedicated fan base, his real plan began.

He began employing interns and secretaries, climbing his way to the top. He even ran for president, winning by a landslide. He was everyone's favorite, and they couldn't see his ulterior motive until it was too late. By the time everyone realized what was going on, he was already in control of the government and the entire country, and they had locked away the only man who could save them: me.

A light shone in my face through the bars of the cell. I looked up weakly, expecting my usual plate of sustenance. I was greeted, however, by none other than Crimson Katana himself.

“I suppose you’ve come to set me free,” I retorted sarcastically.

“Free . . .” he pondered aloud. “Yes, I suppose in a way I’ve come to set you free. I mean, I do owe you big time. Your heroic personality and tragic predictability allowed me to achieve my ultimate goal.” He paced back and forth, his cape swishing around him with every turn. I caught a glimpse of a reflective metal hanging from the side of his belt, and immediately I knew why he came. “I know the worst thing I could do is have you sit here, helpless, as you watch me take over the rest of the world . . .” I winced. He’s right about that.

“But,” he continued, “You don’t deserve the blessing to live in the utopia I will create.” With that he flourished the pistol from his belt and held it to my face. He cocked the gun, and as common courtesy, hesitated and allowed me to give a few last words.

“You always were the worst one of the family, big brother,” I said.

“Say hi to mom and dad for me,” he replied with a sneer.

I heard a bang.

Then everything disappeared.