

Better Together (Man & Woman to Superheroine Merge TG)

By FoxFaceStories

A Commission for Camden Levy

Disaster strikes when star quarterback Flint Thompson is forced to partner with the lonely and brilliant female student Kaede Yamamoto for a necessary course credit. After accidentally activating her fusion experiment, the pair are literally merged into a single new person - an athletic and fiery superheroine who has all of their strongest qualities combined! The only problem is, both minds are warring over this new body, and Flint definitely doesn't want to stay female!

Better Together

Issue 1#: Fusion Explosion

Flint Thompson scored another goal, and the crowd went wild. The cheerleaders began their victory dance, and more than a few were putting on a personal display for him. Everyone knew that he was single, and that he was the hottest male commodity on the market, him included. Why settle for one hot chick when you could rotate them on a monthly or even weekly basis? He had the charisma and the looks to pull it off. And there was the representative from the NFL, there to see him. Waiting in the wings to give him the ultimate prize: a professional career in the big leagues, earning multi-millions and scoring the hottest supermodels the world had to offer.

"You're going to be a star, Flint!" he called, a contract already in hand promising everything with no strings attached.

"And that's not all, big boy," came a sultry voice.

He turned, and there she was. Flame Dancer. *Literally* the hottest superheroine on the planet, and current leader of the Hero Society. Flint had always imagined having superpowers, but if he wasn't to be one of those lucky few, he'd take having a superpowered girlfriend. Other people, like his best friend Dave, all went for the ultra-busty Meteor Woman or that thick new MILF type with the mythic powers, Lady Atlas. But for Flint, it was all about that fit, athletic frame and ultra hot abilities. Not to mention that literally flaming hair.

And now she was standing right before him, her hair slowly dimming to that still-fiery ginger, her eyes no longer glowing. She sauntered up to him, her yellow and gold form fitting outfit with its flame symbol doing wonders to emphasise her female form.

"Thought I'd drop by and meet this new superstar on the field they've been talking about," Flame Dancer said. She traced her finger up over his chest, as if drawing a symbol there. *"You know, I may be the leader of the Hero Society, but that doesn't mean I'm not a girl underneath it all. And this girl likes a man with big, strong muscles, Flint."*

Flint grinned, and leaned in for a kiss. She did the same, and their lips were on the verge of touching when her expression suddenly turned quizzical.

"Dude, are you even listening to me?" she said in a male voice.

Flint blinked, and the fantasy in his mind had dissipated, much to his chagrin. Instead, he was in his college dorm staring at a goddamn application form. His best friend and roommate Dave had just entered, and had a look of amusement on his face.

"You were imagining Stacey Ackermann or someone, weren't you?"

"Or someone," Flint said, a grin on his dark-skinned features. He ran his hands through the tight black cornrows on his scalp. "Flame Dancer, y'all."

Dave giggled like a schoolboy. "Man, even for you, Flint, Flame Dancer is out of your league!"

"Not if I make it to the big leagues, I bet."

"Well, to get *into* the big leagues, you're gonna have to pass college. And since you've failed just about every damn course—"

"Only half."

"-by being a total dumbass—"

"Granted."

-you gotta finish that form, sign it, get it to the college, and hurry up and fucking earn those extra credits to pass."

Flint sighed as he looked at the form. A whole range of options to make up the credit he needed. He was a dumbass, he knew that. He'd always been more muscle than sense. He was six-foot-three and built like a freight train (they literally called him the Flint Train on the field), and he doubted he'd be good for anything but football in his life. Well, that and a whole lot of sex with the endless parade of ladies who chased him.

But now it was biting him right in his black ass.

"Shit, I gotta take all of these courses? Man, this sucks."

Dave sat down beside him. He was like a photo negative of Flint: still built big, but with red hair, grey eyes, and pale skin that he claimed was part of his Irish heritage. It explained the freckles, that was for sure. He was also on the football team, but didn't have the skill to go fully professional. His plan was in *accounting*, which Flint could barely believe. Numbers had never been his specialty, and he was paying for it now.

“Well, you gotta make up a ton of credit, dude. The college is doing you a favour, and they must really believe in you to justify this level of mentorship and adjustment. Hell, they’ve put together a goddamn flowchart.”

“Yeah, and it still sucks. I don’t wanna take three or four extra classes and wreck my summer to boot, all so I can finally get over the line. That is way too much shit on my plate, dude.”

Dave frowned. “What about that one?”

“What one?”

“Advanced Physics Engineering. Looks like it gives a *lot* of credit, all in one course.”

Flint narrowed his eyes. “It’s run by a student?”

“Some are, if they’re, like, super brilliant or whatever.”

Flint ran his fingers through the gaps in his cornrows. “Sounds beyond me, but . . . better than taking a lot of courses, right? And Kaede Yamamoto . . . is that a guy name or a girl name?”

“Girl, I think. Hang on.” Dave checked on his phone. “Sounds like it’s a Japanese name. Girl, definitely.”

Flint grinned, a simple but daring plan forming in his head. “A girl, huh? A nerdy science girl who probably doesn’t get to have a strong, muscly type show interest in her *ever*, am I right?”

Dave chuckled at this. “You know, you *could* just try to do the work.”

“Nah man, you said it yourself; I’m a dumbass. But seduce a chick into giving me a good set of grades? *That*, I can do.”

He looked at the complicated description of the course again.

“Okay, Kaede Yamamoto. Let’s see what you think of me.”

Kaede didn’t think much of Flint Thompson. It had only been a day, and she could not even begin to understand why he had been allowed to partner up with her. She was running a goddamn *fusion experiment*, and now this big beast of a man was practically hitting buttons when he turned his shoulders, they were so wide.

“So, what is this thing we’re doing again?” Flint asked.

Kaede sighed as she looked up at him. Was there no memory retrieval skills anymore? Had something happened to the human brain that was forcibly devolving it? Or did Flint simply present the future of mankind: irreverent, unknowing, and obsessed only with primitive sports and displays of physical attraction?

“As I explained *all of yesterday*,” she said sharply, tapping her pen on the side of the steel chamber she’d had constructed following college approval. “This is a *fusion device*. It is a theoretical experiment to demonstrate the possible practical application of fusion technology for the purpose of revolutionising power generation.”

Flint bit his lip and nodded, causing her to sigh again.

“It will hopefully be a new way to power things.”

“I understood the first part,” he replied in a snappy tone.

“Sure you did.”

“It combines particles or some shit in a way that causes some kind of major reaction, and if you can control that reaction it’s a major energy source or whatever.”

Kaede was about to reply with something similarly snarky, only to hold herself back.

“That’s . . . not the worst explanation of it.”

Flint smirked, then rested in a way that blocked Kaede’s exit from the lab. She was only a petite girl, a short Japanese woman who had kept to herself and her own genius most of her own life. Her long hair was almost always tied up, and her glasses were smart but not stylish, there for the practical purpose of allowing her to spot necessary minutiae. She knew she was plain looking and not good with social manners, and while it did (very, very secretly) eat away at her, she never allowed anyone to know it.

“Mr Thompson, may I be allowed to exit to the next section of *my* lab?”

Flint smirked. “That depends. We don’t have to be in such a rush, y’know. Did anyone tell you that you’ve got real pretty eyes, Kaede?”

She’d never been told that before, and it caused her jaw to drop - but only briefly. And then it clicked.

“Flint. I am not a fool. You have been assigned here against my will due to exterior pressures, ones that no doubt have something to do with the college’s aspirations for you. I did not want you here, and I still do not want you here. This entire societal preoccupation with athletes puzzles me entirely; at least the superheroes and villains of the wider world often allow enormous breakthroughs in physics research, technological wonders, and so forth. But football? Please. So don’t think your show of muscles will impress me, nor your facile attempt at flirting.”

Flint blinked. He’d never had a girl resist him in such a . . . surgical manner before.

“Wait, are you saying you’re not impressed with me?”

She rolled her eyes. “Hardly. And I’m not falling for any attempt to resuscitate your failing and flailing mark just because you flash a winning smile and some sexy muscles.”

Flint grinned. “So you admit my muscles are sexy?”

This time it was Kaede who had no idea what to say next.

“I - that’s not what I meant!”

"I'm just saying, this course is six weeks long. I might impress you."

"Somehow, I doubt that. You'd need to have at least fifty more IQ points to even impress me, and that is a near-statistical impossibility."

"You chase big-brained egg-heads."

She scoffed. "I don't chase *anybody*. My work is too important."

Flint paused, looking at one of the panels of the fusion device. "So . . . you're saying you're too nervous to date someone."

She spun around and batted his hand from its position near a panel with buttons on it. She practically had to jump just to reach him; she was far, far shorter.

"Stop that! And no - I've - I've dated before! Why are we even talking about this? Why are you even *here!*?"

He folded his arms. "It's just like you said. I'm here to save my marks. Look, I know I'm a dumbass. I'm just here to earn my credit and go onto the NFL, okay? I'm a lot of meat and bone and muscle, and I look good being it. That's my thing. I don't like having to be part of your world for a month and a half any more than you want to be part of mine. But if you're not gonna let me show you a damn good time, then you better find some way to pass me, because otherwise this is gonna be one shitty six weeks for both of us, hey? Because I got six months to work on this, and I'm a spiteful dude. I'll keep on coming back here if I have to."

Kaede had never been the most social person. She preferred lab equipment to people, generally. Still, she often had a decent read on motive. People loved to prey on genius, and jocks like Flint most of all.

"You don't mean that," she told him, her plain face stoic, without expression.

Flint shrugged. "Maybe not, but do you want to risk it?"

She bit her lip, turning it over her teeth. "Fine. I shall do my best to uplift your caveman understanding of matters." She checked her watch and frowned. "But it will have to be tomorrow. We've already gone overtime."

"Hey, you insisted on touring me this late!"

"Because I didn't want you interrupting the time when my mind is most active and not reduced in faculties due to any serotonin release!"

"I - ugh! Fine, tomorrow then."

Flint turned, and Kaede saw it too late. She'd joked in her mind that the man's shoulders were too wide, but they were right beside her fusion experiment and he brushed against it immediately, dislodging one of the panels she'd had open earlier for maintenance checks. She yelled out, moving forwards in seeming slow motion to stop his interference, but at the moment she tripped in her alarm, falling forwards. Flint reacted immediately, just as a star athlete would. He moved his arms and caught her instantly, but in doing so brushed his

forearm right against the control switchboard, activating the turn-on sequence. In that moment, Kaede realised that *she'd* been an idiot too: her frustration at being saddled with this football-playing oaf meant she had forgotten to shut down the device properly. Everything was still in slow motion: she cried out again, trying to push past the enormous man, batting at his dark skin with her fists, but his expression was simply confusion as she tried to get his attention on the glowing golden power radiating from the centre of the fusion chamber.

Too late did he realise.

Too late did the petite Japanese-American manage to slide past him and reach the switchboard.

Too late did she begin to initiate the shutdown sequence.

Too late, because the panel was open, and the fusion power *exploded* outwards in a bright orange and yellow corona of energy that crackled with unlimited power. Kaede and Flint both half-turned, she screaming in horror as the energy expanded straight towards her, threatening to rend her to little more than scattered dust and atoms. Flint shoved ahead of her at the last second, his protective instincts taking over, interspersing himself between the fusion explosion and the brilliant young scientist.

"WATCH OU-"

And then the light hit him, and he was disintegrated by the corona. Kaede had only a moment to witness the man's instantaneous demise before his atoms were scattered through and *into* her. She screamed, and then even that collapsed into nothingness as the wave hit her.

Something was wrong. They should have been dead, but instead it was like they had been *catapulted*. Flint's mind was cast back, and it was like he was standing over, under, and *within* Kaede Yamamoto's body. There was no other way to describe it; he could feel all of her sensations. They were both surrounded by the blasting furnace of fusion energy, but they had not died. Instead, it was as if he had been overlaid upon her.

"*What's . . . happening?*" he said, and his voice had this strange aftereffect to it, like Kaede was saying the same lines.

"*I - I don't know,*" she replied, and he found his lips moving with hers, repeating her words. "*We appear to be in some kind of fusion-energy stasis.*"

"*What the fuck is that?*"

"*I don't know. I just coined it. We're interwoven together. I can feel you . . . I can feel your feelings.*"

"Wha- holy shit. You're not wrong. This is too weird. I'mma see if I can-"

He pulled up an arm to separate it from hers, and instead hers came with his. It was like he was made out of outlines. His were red, and hers were blue, almost as if they were by personality type - his fiery attitude versus her cool stoicism. They were like living sketches, their lines not even filled in, and the energy continued to roil around them.

"Um," they both said.

"What the fuck is this?" they replied.

"I don't know. Which one of us is talking right now?"

"You are."

"Me?"

"No, you! I mean - ugh! This is fucking hard. It's like a total improbability has taken place and man, I just wanna play fucking football and solve complex mathematical equations and play some Fifa with Dave and I don't like videogames they're a waste of time, get cultured you imbecile who are you calling imbecile you're the one who got us stuck here no I'm not you hit the button oh so it's your fault I mean my fault I mean who am I and what are you doing to me well I haven't figured that out yet because your machine that's my machine hasn't stopped doing it's thing it's thing stop talking like a caveman and help me - OH GOD!"

The energy, which had expanded across the whole lab, was now starting to contract. The pressure bore down upon them. Scattered particles that had been part of their flesh and bone and tissue and organs were recombining and pulling inwards. Their minds, currently composed of pure energy and projecting imagery of their bodies, were still interspersed upon one another, however. Kaede realised it first: she pulled her mind free of Flint's, snapping it out for just a moment to get some clear space to think.

"We need to separate! The fusion implosion is going to merge us! We'll die! Horribly!"

"I'm trying to separate, you nerd! Muscle doesn't mean much now! Use your brainpower!"

"I can't! You're leeching it! You're - NGH!"

"Why aren't you - OHHH!"

Their minds were snapped back together, separate yet connected, operating on different wavelengths but emerging from the same radio. The particles flew back and forth, and a new combination of DNA bloomed right before their eyes, becoming their new reality. Physical sensation returned as it was meant to be, and as the fires of the fusion chamber collapsed like a singularity upon them, so were their various traits pushed together.

Muscles swelled, courtesy of Flint's strength.

Intelligence enhanced, courtesy of Kaede's brilliant mind.

Their height shifted to around 5'9, midway between their respective dimensions.

But to Flint's despair, his male particles were beaten to the punch by Kaede's XX chromosomes. He could feel them altering the combined body that was assembling from the fusion explosion-implosion, and with Kaede's intelligence he could feel any chance of manhood fleeing away from him. Their hips formed, wider and healthier than Kaede's had been, and two breasts of not-unimpressive size formed. A slit formed between their thighs, and a pert ass along with it. Long feminine legs followed, along with athletic yet feminine arms. Long curly hair spilled down from their head, which was a mix of their features, albeit in a very womanly look: thick Afro-Asian lips and nose but with gorgeous almond eyes and mid-olive brown skin tone. The pair yelled together, their minds overlapping but not fully merged, as a new and improved body formed around their consciousnesses.

"What the actual fuuuuuuuck!?" they cried together, borrowing from Flint's lexicon.

BOOOM!

Windows shattered. Lab equipment exploded. The fusion chamber melted into nothingness, consumed in the blast.

And standing on shaking legs, stepping awkwardly as if deeply drunk, was a single body where there had been two.

A new person had been created, and neither was in control.

The pair screamed as they tried to find sure footing, and ended up quite literally rocketing up through the roof and into the sky, fusion power blasting from their feet.

It was a rocky start to a very new kind of relationship.

Issue 2#: Superpowers!

Flint and Kaede crash landed in a forest over twenty miles away from their campus. The pair had not stopped screaming until they finally smashed through several trees, knocked over a two-hundred year old redwood, and then collided into the ground, making a small crater that left several rocks *melted*.

It was only then that one of them managed to gain control of this alien and very *naked* female body they both possessed. Unfortunately for them, it was the one that *wasn't* meant to be a woman.

"Oh God. Fuck. Fucking hell, dude, what the fuck!? What is happening? What is happening to my voice? This can't be real! This is crazy! No way this shit is real!"

Flint dragged their female body up over the size of the crater. Everything was wrong about it. For one, despite flying across the sky like some kind of human rocket, this body was weaker than his old one. And for two, there were two weights on his chest that were jiggling

and wobbling with every movement, hanging from his body as he crawled. His dimensions were all wrong: his hips were too wide, his stature too short, his hair getting in his dirt-strewn face, and his cock . . . well, that was just plain *gone*.

He placed a feminine hand there anyway, only to let out a squeaking sound.

"Fuuuuuuck," he gasped in a deep-sounding female voice, one that had just the slightest trace of Kaede's accent in it. "I've got a pussy!"

"That's vagina, thank you. I'll not accept that crass diminutive."

Flint stood with alarm, which caused his new breasts to bounce again. He cupped them: they weren't large, but they certainly weren't small either, and in the early evening light they were surprisingly cold, even after that fusion-powered flight.

"Who was that!?" he demanded. His voice had a low vocal fry to it. "Come out! Who are you?"

"It's me, you caveman. It's Kaede. Kaede Yamamoto."

"Where - where are you? I can't see you!"

"We're sharing the same body, you dolt! The fusion device implosion collapsed us into the same body. We're two minds in the same body - one made from me and you!"

Flint swallowed. "That - that don't make no sense. Y'all need to explain that!"

Something strange happened. A churning sensation that thrummed through his entire core. In an instant, Flint was ejected from control of the body as Kaede asserted control of it. Suddenly, it was like he was in the backseat: he continued to experience everything their shared body was doing, but Kaede now controlled it. She held up her hands and looked at them, her jaw gaping as she turned her hands over.

"We appear to have even combined races," she said.

"Give me my body back!"

"It's not either of our bodies. I appear to be taller. But shorter than you were. My breasts are . . . larger. Odd. But my genitalia-"

"Our genitalia, thank you very much!"

"-is entirely female. We appear to be totally female."

"Nevermind, I meant to say your genitalia! That's what I meant! Now hurry up and get me my body back!"

"I have no idea how to," she said. She flexed her arms and legs, feeling the strong muscles there. This was a very muscular and certainly tall female body. It was the kind one expected to see in the Hero Society and-

"We have superpowers," she said, the realisation hitting her. "Somehow, the accident you caused-"

"You caused. It was your stupid machine!"

“-has not only merged us together, but given us physics-defying superpowers, like Flame Dancer-”

“She’s the hottest one.”

“-or The Jester.” Kaede blinked. She looked down over her form, noting how healthy and fit it was. It was like she had absorbed all the best parts of Flint. This could be worth studying! Certainly, it needed recording at the very least! Only . . . did she want to be famous for this? An accident? No, she had to record it privately and find a way back, and only then could she get the credit. This was . . . groundbreaking. That was, if she still had the power to generate fusion.

“Hey, can I have control again? You’re blocking me, y’all! Stop being a bitch and lemme-”

“Shut up, I’m trying something!”

She focused energy into her hands, feeling the warmth and glow inside her body, the power of fusion that was now part of her in this new form. And then, as she channeled that very power . . .

. . . nothing happened.

“Damn it!” she said.

“Hey, what are you trying to do? I’m getting cold here! I don’t want to be trapped in a fucking female’s body! We need to get back to your stupid lab already. This is not worth the extra credit, I’m telling you!”

“I’m trying to get us back,” she snapped. “I’m trying to channel the fusion power we used to fly here on accident. But it’s not working!”

There was a pause. *“Dude, we probably have to both focus on it, duh.”*

Kaede blinked again. “You - but - that’s not . . . that’s not a terrible idea, Flint.”

“I know I’m a dumbass, but it just seems to me that-”

“That’s not a dumbass idea at all,” she said out loud. “Wait a moment. Let’s both focus.”

They did so, and something very strange happened. Flint wrestled control of the body again purely by accident, their interlinked minds causing some kind of immediate switch. But in that brief moment between their switch, they were momentarily *one*. Two minds in perfect sync, sharing one body that held untapped and amazing power.

A total melding that made them more than the sum of their parts.

It lasted less than a second, however, because Flint was back in control and their hands were *glowing*. Power radiated from them, bright coronas of energy that rippled and swirled as if building to explode. The potential was there, and they could both feel it.

“Um,” Flint said. “What do we do now?”

“Let it go, maybe? Aim it at a tree?”

"I thought you were the science chick!"

"This is new territory for me! I thought you were the real decisive one?"

"Fine, I'll do it!"

He released the energy, and it shot forth as a golden beam of light that *evaporated* the tree he was aiming at, reducing it to little more than a mist of shaved atoms. The upper half of the tree collapsed backwards, and the remaining trunk had a semicircular bite out of it, still glowing. It didn't set aflame though, and the glow soon faded.

"Woah," Flint said.

"That was very impressive," Kaede said.

"Impressive? We just got goddamn superpowers! We can fly, and throw out fire beams-"

"Fusion beams."

"What else can we do?"

"Give me a moment of control. I have a notion."

Flint reluctantly passed control over to Kaede. Their body was starting to shiver; it was cold out here in the sticks, and every second of nakedness reminded him of how unnatural this all was.

"Okay," Kaede said. "I'm going to try something strange. We're creating fusion energy inside this shared body. We've literally *become* a fusion reactor, of sorts. And because we can create energy, we might have some ability to manipulate matter."

"Okay, I understood, like, most of that."

"I'm going to try and give us some clothing."

"Thank fuck. This is crazy batshit insane enough without me having to look down at these tits when I'm in control. Get us some clothes so we can get out of here."

Kaede focused, and Flint lent her his portion of the power too. They needed both minds in sync in order to use their fusion abilities, and something about it allowed a sort of mental boost as well. Kaede was surprised when she felt her intelligence boosted. Flint was no genius, but . . . was he smarter than he let on? Or was he just smarter than he thought he was? Either way, possibilities opened up for the both of them, and they focused together. Their entire body glowed, its athletic female frame emanating a golden light as new clothing formed. Unfortunately, their idea of what they wanted to wear deviated, however, and when the glow dissipated they were wearing a strange hodgepodge mess: an oversized black hoodie that melted into a lab coat before giving way to a baggy seat of jeans with only one leg, because it turned into a loose pleated green skirt that Kaede often favoured. Even their shoes were mismatched, and nothing from either side fit their new body.

"Hey!" she declared. "That wasn't what I wanted."

"You didn't say what you wanted! I was just thinking about my regular clothing."

"Well, we need to agree on this."

"Obviously. Bad enough I'm temporarily stuck in this girly body. Let's just do something practical."

"Agreed."

"And hot."

"What!?"

"Hey, I'm never gonna get the chance to have a hot, sexy body like this. We should wear something hot."

"No!"

"C'mon! Just a little hot!"

Kaede rolled her eyes, glad at least to be in control, though she could feel Flint chafing for it as well. Men. Even when they were turning *into* women, they still found a way to objectify *their own* new body. In the end, an agreement was formed, and they focused their fusion power again. Their body glowed a second time, the clothing shifting and being recreated in a more sensible fashion. They were now wearing a tight fitting red shirt that emphasised their chest a little too much for Kaede's liking, with a pushup bra that was definitely Flint's doing. They had a black leather jacket over the top for warmth, and a set of blue jeans that clung a bit too tightly around their ass. Flint obviously liked boots on his women, since they now had an impressive black pair that went up to mid-calf. Perfect, at least, for hiking through the forest they were stuck in. They began the trek back, and for a time neither really 'talked' to one another, simply moving to keep ahead of the dying evening light, and neither confident enough to try flying again. They did manage to experiment a little: they could hold up a hand and infuse it with light, making it easy to see their surroundings, and they were at least able to very briefly expel energy from their feet to jump up a steep bank that neither could climb. Their body wasn't exactly as strong as Flint's had been, but it was impressively athletic, still. Not as impervious as some of the big leaguers in the Hero Society, but their skin healed impressively quick after a scratch.

"Damn, we're cool," Flint said, back in control after Kaede had expended so much power. "Matter manipulation, huh? Reckon I can make a new gaming console for myself?"

"I'm not sure of the limits of this power. We'd need to experiment with them."

"Finally, a science that's fun. Of course, I need to get my old body back. Do you think we can keep these powers when your chamber thing changes us back?"

Kaede was silent for a moment in his mind.

"Hello? You gonna answer?"

"I'm thinking. Calculating. This fusion was an accident. A one in a million chance. Flint, I'm not entirely sure we can change back. At all."

Flint looked down at his female body. The one he now shared with Kaede.

“Uh, come again?”

“We’ll have to check at the lab to be sure, but I don’t honestly see how we could possibly regain our bodies. The science is just too complex, and our situation completely improbable. That’s why I’ve been so silent, Flint. I’ve been trying to find a way back. I . . . I don’t think there is one.”

Flint stopped. Their hair started glowing bright golden, its dark curls rising as if underwater, or in weightless space. Their eyes glowed that same celestial light as the indignation rose inside of him.

“YOU’VE GOT TO BE FUCKING KIDDING ME!?”

A massive corona of energy exploded into the sky. It could be seen for *miles*.

Issue 3#: So I Guess We’re in This Together, Huh?

Kaede couldn’t get immediate access to the Fusion chamber. Neither of them could. For one, it was halfway to being molten slag, and the rest of the vital equipment was damaged too. For two, they were a new person, unrecognisable to anyone: an Afro-Asian woman, ‘*blasian*’ as Flint kept annoyingly put it, without any ID or credentials to their name. And third was perhaps the biggest obstacle of all: the blast, not to mention the sky being lit up on the horizon just a few hours later, had attracted a good deal of the superhero community, including major figures from the Hero Society. ARTEMIS was even here, the human-staffed super oversight agency collecting the fusion chamber and loading up pieces into their trucks while their spokespeople fed lines to the press.

“This appears to just be purely an accident!” a red-headed woman explained over the concerns from assembled reporters. *“Some kind of blast has occurred with a failure in a fusion experiment. We cannot release any names of those involved, but there may be two casualties involved in this incident.”*

They droned on, leaving Flint to gasp in Kaede’s mind.

“You’re fucking kidding me!” he said as they stood by the side of one of the campus buildings, watching from the barricades the police had set up. *“They think I’m dead?”*

“Both of us,” Kaede hissed. “This is all your fault for hitting that button.”

“You tripped on me!”

“I - fine! It was both of our fault.”

“Your experiment did this, y’all. You never turned it off.”

She hated that he was right. Even more, they both hated this situation. She doubted they could turn back, but Flint was insistent: if there was even an infinitesimal chance for him

to get his own body returned, then he demanded they pursue it. In his own words, *"No way am I sitting down to piss for the rest of my life, let alone deal with periods. Or you."*

"The feeling is mutual," she replied to him. "About sharing the body, I mean. Periods are just part of life that I've long suspected men can't handle. Perhaps you'll be able to test that hypothesis for me."

In the end, an accord had been struck. They had to share this body for now, so they would at least *explore* the possibility of changing back, even if Kaede viewed it as practically impossible. Her brilliant mind was already searching for other solutions; perhaps even finding a way to segment Flint's mind into a robot shell or something. That way she could have this body to herself, which she wouldn't mind. She'd never had time to become athletic, but she was appreciating it now. And a small part of her mind didn't have an issue with looking a little sexier, even if-

"Stop thinking about how hot we look and focus on what we're going to do."

They blushed together, but it was all because of Kaede. "Wait - how did you know what I was thinking?"

"I get impressions or whatever. Don't you?"

"Yes, a little, but . . . shit! This is even more complicated than I thought. Wait, that looks like Flame Dancer."

"The hottest one."

"Shut up."

Indeed, the leader of the Hero Society was present, indicating that it was clearly a slow night, or perhaps that she simply wanted to get some field work in rather than more photo ops and office work. The athletic flame-based heroine landed to the ground, the flames in the air dissipating behind her. She was chatting with a knight-based hero named Signet Lance, and one Flint didn't recognise but Kaede assumed was Elastiband, a musical hero who could stretch reality with his tunes. They were chatting amongst themselves and with ARTEMIS personnel, evidently combing for any radiation problems, or if this was some kind of supervillain origin story.

"They're taking it all away," Kaede said. "We better go and introduce ourselves."

Flint instantly wrestled control from her. For a moment, their shared female body spasms, as if suffering a fit. A few eyes looked their way, but most were concentrated on the scene. Flint quickly straightened their body.

"Hey, what the hell was that? Warn me next time before you use your primitive caveman brain to take control!"

"Shut up!" he hissed, holding up their jacket collar to hide his lips and not look crazy. "There's no way in hell I'm letting you tell those people who I am. Right here? With all that press? I'd be a laughing stock forever. And not to mention my career: they'd never let me

play for the Star City Falcons if they know I had superpowers at some point in my life. I'd be accused of cheating for the rest of my short-lived career, damn it!"

Kaede grimaced. Well, she couldn't grimace, but she *would have* grimaced.

"But they can help us! The Hero Society has some of the brightest minds in the world, right here in Star City! And since we have superpowers while we're stuck like this, we'll be of particular interest to them."

Flint *did* grimace. Once more he looked over his female body. The fun factor of being a very attractive, fit woman like Flame Dancer was starting to wear off hard, and it was made worse by the fact that he had to share this body with such a total nerd.

"Fine. But we'll introduce ourselves on *our* terms, okay? I'm not rushing into the press with this."

"What are you say - oh no."

Flint smirked. "Oh yes, egghead. You've spent your life in a lab way too long, y'all. Time for us to get our *superhero* on."

Kaede wanted to take control again just so she could smack her forehead.

"This is going to be a nightmare."

Kaede was such a private person that her second address was entirely unknown to anyone, even the police currently investigating, alongside ARTEMIS, if she was truly killed in the explosion. She took their body to the apartment, and while the temptation to try and fly again was there, they instead took the subway, using a quick application of their power to knock out the ticketer so they could sneak on without needing a card.

Flint gasped mentally at the sight of the apartment. It was several floors up, occupying the entire penthouse of an otherwise private building that seemed to have no other patrons. There was a massively expensive piano against one wall, a grand fireplace, and an elaborate kitchen. There was even a laboratory space one floor below.

"What the fuck? You said you had an apartment."

"An apartment *building*," Kaede replied out loud, disabling the security system and then updating it to include their new form. "I own the entire building. It's my home away from home when I want to be alone with more thoughts. Even more alone, I mean."

"The fuck? You own all of this? How the hell did you get all this money?"

Kaede stopped moving their body for a moment and turned their head to the space above the fireplace, where a large photo portrait displayed two Asian parents and a small daughter in their arms.

"I . . . inherited it," she said.

Flint was silent for a moment. *"You an orphan?"*

"I prefer to think of myself as a survivor. Car crash."

"Yeah, I'm alone too."

Her curiosity piqued at that. "You don't have parents?"

"Oh, I got parents. I just never had a Mum and Dad."

"I don't understand the distinction."

Flint seemed to pulse a sort of deep sadness through her mind. She really *could* feel what he was thinking about: a sense of loneliness that matched her own.

"Let's just say that not everyone should have a kid. Sometimes they come to hate the one they've got."

"I'm sorry, I didn't realise-"

"So, this is our lair, huh? Our epic superhero lair. Off the grid, no one knows we're here. We can work together to build a new identity. I moved cities and changed my name and everything to get away from my folks, so I've got a bit of experience. You can handle the smart stuff. But first . . . we need to come up with a costume. Get into the Hero Society and get them to help us without this goin' public, y'know?"

Kaede recognised the clear subject change. "Fine, fine. But . . . this body does need to go to the toilet. Do you want me to . . . ?"

Her cheeks blushed, courtesy of Flint's feelings, not her own. Interesting.

"Y-yeah! You do that! I mean, I'm along for the ride, but I'd rather not deal with the whole sitting down to pee thing just yet. We're not due for a period, are we?"

She chuckled, something she rarely did. "If we're going by my calendar? Not for another three weeks."

"Thank fuck. Okay, let's sort the business, check ourselves out in that mirror, and get to work."

"Check ourselves out?"

"We haven't seen our face much yet, and I want to know how hot we are!"

She rolled her eyes. "Of course you do."

Though she got the sense that he already knew an embarrassing fact about her, which was that she was mighty curious herself.

Flint *did* take a little bit of control back after Kaede had taken care of business 'down there.' Specifically, he didn't pass up the opportunity to remove their shirt and feel up his new breasts, which were perfect C-cups, according to Kaede's estimates. She'd moaned mentally in his ear, embarrassed at his actions and annoyed at them.

"We are going to have to establish a consent around touching this body while we share it!" she'd demanded.

Of course, it hadn't stopped Kaede from appreciating their cleavage while pushing their breasts together. Thankfully, he'd stopped, and after sharing a meal (literally) they got to work. It was a big meal, of course: they wolfed down five pizzas they'd ordered. Evidently, food consumption was necessary for their fusion power generation.

It was time to invent a superhero costume.

Well, it *would have been time*, except that it was now pushing towards midnight, and the pair were equally exhausted, given that they shared a body.

"Um, I think this means we need to sleep," Kaede said awkwardly, her cheeks blushing again. "Together."

"Obviously. Wait, this is gonna be hella weird, isn't it?"

"Only if we make it so. Look, I don't know what unconsciousness might bring. It could cause further blending, or no issues whatsoever. And this body is new to me."

"Please, you're just more in shape and sexier. I'm the one that's gotta put up with having a fuckin' vagina. Everyone thinks I'm dead!"

"And the same for me. Which is why we go to the Hero Society, plead our case *privately* as a superhero, and see what we can do. *After* some rest."

Flint mentally yawned. He couldn't disagree. The pair got changed into Kaede's nightwear, and she went through the annoyingly long process of brushing her teeth and moisturising her skin, then attending to her hair.

"Can't we hurry this along?"

"I would, but I'm not used to being, as you put it, *blasian*. This curly hair is something I'm not used to."

"Heh. A lotta folk don't know what to do about black hair. Don't wash it too much: it'll dry out."

"Noted."

The two went to bed with one another, in a manner that was at once strangely intimate and yet also completely platonic. Flint was still finding this entire experience so alien and wrong, but he did take an opportunity to feel his breasts. He lowered a hand down between his thighs, but Kaede reasserted control.

"Show some self-restraint."

"Please, like y'all ain't been flicking the bean from time to time."

"Only in private. And since we aren't capable of gaining true *privacy*, I demand you leave *our* body alone and get some rest."

Sleep took its time to come. It had been the longest, strangest, wrongest, weirdest, most calamitous day of Flint's life, and while for Kaede *calamity* was reserved for one

particular day in her childhood, this was definitely number two on the list. Still, sleep did finally come, even as their body tossed and turned. Their separate controls slipped, the two minds melding into one as they submerged into unconsciousness. Kaede and Flint shared strange dreams of vivid colours and fusion-powered marvels, the possibilities of their new combined form astounding to feel.

And they felt it together.

“Nah, too similar to Flame Dancer.”

“I don’t see the problem. I thought you liked Flame Dancer.”

“Yeah, she’s hot as hell. But we need something more unique. I don’t wanna rip her style, man.”

Kaede groaned. They’d been up since early that morning. Flint had to take their body to pee in the night, and hadn’t liked it, so he’d made her be the one to drag them out of bed. Lucky him. Now she was irritable, and the pair had once more had to order a large breakfast to sate their fusion-powered appetite. Only now were they designing their costume. It felt like an RPG video game to Flint, the kind his best friend Dave always played, where you just designed your character’s look with endless options at the start. They stood before a mirror, posing dramatically (at least when Flint was in control), combining their powers and switching control as they tried different outfits.

“Wait!” Flint cried, as they worked together to adjust their superhero costume again. *“That one! Lemme in charge.”* She relinquished control to him. *“Just need to make some minor changes, and . . . there!”*

He whistled, and Kaede joined him, their control of their single female body briefly falling into perfect synchronicity. Their outfit was a reflective gold, skin tight, but with a white jacket with that same golden trim over the top. The jacket was short, not even descending to their midriff, but it gave an awesome accent to their base costume, which covered all the way down to their feet but left their feet bare. The same was true of their hands; the golden sleeves sculpted perfectly to their muscles, but ended at the wrist.

“So we can generate fusion power,” Flint said.

“That’s . . . quite clever, actually.”

“Nah, it’s just obvious. I know I’m a dumbass, but this seemed the right way to go.”

Kaede frowned in her mind. It had not been obvious to her. She was interested in superheroes academically, but Flint actually *got* how to make a practical costume. The chest, which likewise cupped their chest, also displayed a fusion symbol: specifically the sign for an atom. They didn’t have a cape, but they *did* have a helmet: one that left their face

bare, but framed their face, subtly giving a different impression of their cheek structure and temples to throw off their looks. It had a slightly glowing light in its centre at their forehead.

“What do you think? Have a spin.”

Flint ceded control, and Kaede actually lowered her jaw, collecting herself for a few moments. Their frizzy loose afro hung beautiful, falling to the sides of the helmet and moving almost playfully with each shift of her head. Her lips were darker and thicker than she was used to, though her eyes were much the same, but for the first time she could admire just how . . . beautiful she was. Without meaning too, she made a pose, lifting one hand up and cocking her hip to the side, as if showing off her body yet also preparing to take off.

“Hot as fuck, right?”

Kaede caught herself and stopped. “It’s . . . good, Flint. It’s really good. This is a very aesthetic costume design. You’ve done well.”

“Hey, you can’t win a game without a team, no matter what a star you are. I always tell that to my friend Dave. He thinks he doesn’t matter as much because he’s not the strongest player. But it’s teamwork he excels in, man.”

“That’s . . . very smart as well. Yes, this costume is the one.”

“Admit it, it’s fucking awesome, right?”

She giggled, something she rarely did. “It’s fairly awesome. It-”

Suddenly the television, which had been playing in the background, changed to the news, and a story played that caught both of their attention.

“Investigations are ongoing, but it appears that there are indeed two victims of the unexpected blast at the college. Pictured below are Kaede Yamamoto, a brilliant and promising physics student, aged twenty two, and Flint Thompson, star quarterback for the Star City Falcons, aged twenty. Thompson had just recently joined Yamamoto on a credit program when tragedy struck. Journalist Ralph Riley has more to say.”

Flint watched in horror as the city’s pre-eminent investigative journalist outlined the nature of the blast and how it would have atomised those nearby it, explaining their disappearance. A number of his football buddies expressed sadness at his passing, some were even crying. Dave was barely able to hold back tears, and it broke his heart to see, perhaps even more than normal thanks to him having so much damn estrogen in his system now.

“I just . . . I feel so responsible, y’know. I should have told him not to take it. He’s my best friend and he’s just . . . gone.”

The anchor woman's voice returned. *“This station tried to reach out to members of Kaede Yamamoto's family or close friends, have have been so far unable to find them. She was reportedly a solitary figure, a budding genius in her field. The college dean, George Anderson, had this to say-”*

Kaede turned it off. Tears were in her eyes. No one to speak of her. No one to shed tears. As always. Flint felt her sorrow, and for a moment the two shared in it. The weirdness of their new situation, their awesome powers, it had been an interesting distraction. Now, the tragedy of their past lives, and the possibility of this being their permanent one, sat heavy upon them.

It was Kaede, unusually, who recovered and balled her fists, a fierce glow emanating from them.

"Okay," she said. "You were right. We *are* going to turn back. Let's join the Hero Society."

Issue 4#: Suited Up

"It's a stupid name! We're not atomic!"

"So what?" Flint asked as they bounded over the rooftops, aided by the fusion jet-stream from their bare feet. "It *feels* atomic."

"Fusion-power is an alternative to nuclear power. Which, by the way, is technically distinct from atomic power. There are subtleties of science to appreciate here!"

"Well I think Atomika works. It even sounds kinda feminine - I'm giving y'all that for free, you know!"

"And I still think that if you're going to at least go with a valid naming convention, then Fusion Woman-"

"Sounds too weird. The same sound, repeated."

They joined their powers together, blasting across a street that separated two blocks, and rolling expertly to their feet to continue running. They weren't even tired; it was incredible! And as always when they joined together for a powerful burst, they switched control, and it came with impressive seamlessness this time.

"Then what about Corona?" Kaede said out loud. "It gives an impression of how our powers look, not to mention the blast."

"Yeah, you know what else is called Corona? A very, very popular beer, Kaede."

"I - really?"

"Jesus, y'all need to get out of that lab. Don't you have, like, friends or whatever?"

"I'm too busy for friends."

"Damn. No teamwork at all, huh? No wonder you feel like such a control freak."

"I'm not - wait. I hear a siren."

They both could, of course, and both were clued in immediately. Kaede had managed to make a miniature police scanner back at what Flint called her 'Secret Lair,' and its chatter became incessant, numerous officers erupting over some superpowered threat. Apparently it was an entire army of . . . spiders?

"Wait, I don't like spiders," Flint said.

"Please, arachnids are largely harmless, particularly in this region."

"I said I don't do spiders. That means I just plain don't, lady."

Kaede sighed, exasperated. Then she decided for a smarter play. "Do you want your balls back or not, tough guy?"

"Ooh, someone's learning how to socialise. I guess I'm rubbing off on you. Fine, but I am blasting these mofos. I ain't joking about this. Let's jet on over."

They did so, continually improving their form of flight using a series of micro-jumps. Their golden costume shone under the bright midday sun, and their short jacket fluttered dramatically with each leap. They reached the sight of the police report, only to find a number of officers engaged against a threat that was infiltrating the First National Bank of Star City.

Spiders.

Giant mutated spiders.

"Nope, fuck this," Flint said, turning away.

Kaede took control. "This is your stupid plan, cave-brain! I'm not good at this athlete stuff. You need to take the lead on this!"

Flint took control back as she ceded it again. "Ugh, fine!" he cried. He patted his costume down, making sure it wasn't riding up his frankly fantastic ass. "Okay, how do we look?"

"I'm not one for style, just practicality."

"Okay, I'll take that to mean we look badass. Fuck, man. Let's just do this."

They leapt down. The mutated spiders were the size of pigs, and they were moving with alarming rapidity. There were dozens upon dozens of them, and officers were screaming as they were being assaulted and tied up in webs. The spiders were a strange mish-mash of colours, various reflective hues that made them look extra-dimensional. Each had glowing red eyes that deeply unsettled Flint.

"Never fear, Ato-"

"Wait, Nova!"

"Nova is here! Oh, I like that. That's hot."

A police officer brandished a gun at them. "Hands in the air! I said freeze!"

They acted as one, both reaching out with their power instinctively. The gun fired, piercing through their left shoulder and causing them to cry out in pain, but they caught the

gun by its end, and instantly changed its molecular makeup. It flopped to the ground, made of rubber, and the police officer fell back.

"Fuck! That hurt, man. Goddamnit! Don't shoot at me! I'm a hero tryin' ta help, asshole. I'm not behind these freaky spiders!"

The officer's lip trembled. "Sorry, I—"

"Asshole. Get out of my way!"

For once, both of them were in sync, their body healing rapidly but the pain still present.

"We have to be more careful."

"Fuck that, those spiders are surrounding the building. I say we blast 'em!"

"Fine. But at least warn the police."

"Everyone! I'm gonna try and help! Watch your heads, aight?"

The officers ducked behind their parked cars, which had formed a crude barrier, even as numerous giant spiders clambered on top of their vehicles. Nova took to the air, the two-in-one hero stretched out her arms and brought them together. An instinctive melding blurred the lines between their minds, and they fired a glowing golden beam in a wide arc across the cars. The spiders made a strange shrieking sound as they were atomised, and one was blown to smithereens just as it was about to grab a police officer and likely maul him to death. More spiders came, clambering down in droves. Innocent civilians inside the bank were screaming, and so Nova shot forward, moving as if rollerblading, their bare feet boosting out flashes of fusion power to rocket them ahead. They punched one spider and sent it flying, then atomised another. A third was about to shred apart a bank teller, so Flint/Kaede, minds perfectly aligned, converted the ground to goo and then back into wood again, freezing the spider in place. Matter was theirs to master, and they could even alter things at range with the right collective focus and aim, shooting forth their power and transforming the atomic reality of their surroundings.

The spiders shrieked as they died, a horrific wail that sounded like many voices crying out at once. Some of them scuttled away, but Nova showed no mercy, the combined hero moving athletically and using her powers to the fullest. They were one, their focus united, and as the mutant spiders attempted to flee the many civilians in their path were in terrible danger. Nova sank a civilian down into the floor, reducing it to the chemical composition of putty, then crashed into the side of a giant spider. It screeched, wailing at her, and she had to clutch her head, struggling against the tide of psychic energy emanating from the monster. She punched it, Flint's athleticism taking control, allowing her to shove it aside. Kaede's intellect provided a greater mastery of Nova's powers, and combined with Flint's tactical view of a playing field, they were able to annihilate the remaining spiders before anyone else could be hurt. Only a few had managed to escape, screeching that horrible turn

as they went straight for the street, past the firing police, and into the sewer tunnel. Nova pursued them, but just as she reached the upended manhole cover, a purple-skinned spider creature sprang its face forward like some kind of horror movie jump scare, an aberrant and alien screech piercing her ears and channeling right to her brain. Nova screamed, and . . .

. . . Flint and Kaede were separated again. Flint was left in control of their joint body, and he scrambled back, making a rather embarrassing squeak of fear as the spider retreated back down the tunnel.

“What the actual fuck, man! Spiders. Why did it have to be spiders?”

“Get up! We’re trying to make a good impression here!”

“You get up! I’m freaking out here!”

Kaede took control and quickly got to their feet. “Is everyone okay? Anyone hurt?”

A few were, but the officers were quick to establish control over the situation. A few even thanked them. The ordinary civilians at the bank, on the other hand, were far more ecstatic. One poor woman, clearly just as terrified of giant spiders as Flint, literally ran up and *leapt* into Kaede’s arms.

“Thank you! Thank you so much! You saved us!”

“I, er . . . that’s . . .”

“Ugh,” Flint says. *“Say ‘you’re welcome and ask if she’s okay or needs help. She’s a team member on the field - she may need medical attention! Think of it like that!’”*

“Are you okay? And you’re welcome. Do you need help, team member?”

If Flint could have slapped their body in the forehead at that moment, he would have. Thankfully, the woman was clearly overwhelmed and didn’t notice how socially awkward Kaede was.

“I think I’m okay. We all are, thanks to you. I don’t recognise you. Are you a new hero?”

“We’re - I mean, *I’m* Nova. A new superhero. Technically, our powers aren’t actually connected to supernovas, though the appearance of supernova-like effect when we use them seemed appropriate to the . . . yes, I’m new. Very new to this.”

The woman smiled again. “Well, it’s a pleasure to meet you, Nova. I hope to see you again.”

“Uh . . . thank you?”

Flint had to take control. “That was hopeless,” he whispered under his breath.

“I was panicking! I’m not good at all this social stuff! That’s you, cave-brain!”

“At least I wasn’t *talking* like a cave-man, y’all. Now come on, I think there’s heroes arriving and . . . oh shit.”

“What? Who are you looking at? Do you know him?”

Flint did. It was his best friend Dave. The tall, broad-shouldered man with the ginger-hair was staring from the sidelines behind the police barrier, obviously having been evacuated there from the bank. Of all the timings! Of all the coincidences! Flint tried not to look at him, but couldn't help himself. Dave pushed past the barrier and approached.

"Fuck. Take over!"

"What? Why?"

But it was too late. Dave was there, standing just several feet away and admiring Nova's form. Flint got the distinct feeling of being on display, his sexy outfit showing off his new feminine curves in a way his friend approved. Even worse . . . he found himself admiring Dave's form as well. Those broad shoulders, those wonderful forearms, that square, manly jaw and cute ginger hair.

"Oh fuck, I think I'm into guys," Nova said.

"What?" Dave said.

"What?"

"What?"

Dave shook his head. "Sorry, I don't know what's going on. I just . . . uh, I came to thank you for saving me. I lost a good friend recently. I'm, uh, coming to terms with it. Fuck, I just wanted to say thanks."

"Dave, what are you doing here?"

Kaede took a mental intake of breath. Dave, on the other hand, blinked.

"Um, do I know you?"

"No, dude! You don't! Fuck, sorry, just ignore me, y'all. I'm a crazy new super bitch."

Kaede was on the verge of taking control. *"What. The. Hell. Are. You. Doing?"*

But Dave's brow was already knitting into a thoughtful frown, away from the previous confusion. "Flint? Is that - holy shit, is that you?"

Flint groaned. "Fuck! Of all the luck!"

"You're alive?"

"We both are, now shut up! Just - just don't say anything. I'm tryin' not to get stuck with the fucking media up my ass here, okay? I've gotta turn back first. Just . . . I'll contact you, okay?"

"That's it, I'm taking over."

Kaede seized control and their expression changed instantly. "Flint will explain it all soon," she said, much to Dave's further confusion. "Don't you dare go to the press with this, or I'll invent an entirely new device powered from the pain of your cells being lit on fire."

With that, she took to the air, the two of them boosting up by propelling energy from their feet. Dave was left utterly confused below them, and the pair of them like a couple of idiots.

"Well, that went terribly," Kaede said as they rocketed away.

"Oh, shut up."

"First day on the job and you've already blown our secret identities. Plural."

Flint knew she was right, but he couldn't stop thinking about the *other* thing that was worrying him: the way he'd found Dave's hunky body so very . . . curious.

They'd hoped the spiders would be a one-time thing, but apparently there was another attack across town just a week and a half later, though at least they weren't present for it. By that point, Flint was getting itchy over their shared body.

"Come on," he'd whine while in the 'passenger seat.' *"Can't we masturbate just once?"*

"No."

"Y'all are no fun. I seriously could have been paired up with someone way more fun. I get stuck as a girl, and you're telling me I can't at least feel up some titties and pussy?"

"You already feel up our breasts. And show some self-restraint."

"Wh-why are you t-talking to y-yourself?"

Kaede turned their head to look at the bank robber whose getaway car they'd just crumpled into a heap. He was tied together with a metal rod they'd briefly made elastic in order to put around him, but they'd both assumed he'd been knocked out like his buddies.

"Whoops, sorry," Kaede said awkwardly. "I'll render you unconscious now."

She drew on Flint's strength and hit him hard, and he went slack again.

"Goddamn, we suck at this. Now we're talking about our vag in public."

"First of all, never call it that. Second, you started this conversation. Third of all, shut up! They're watching us!"

Two heads may have been better than one, but having a second mind through one pair of eyes could be just as useful. Flint was good at reading people and noticing unexpected angles thanks to his field experience, and so he had been the one to spot members of what could only be ARTEMIS, the superhero oversight organisation, and a number of Hero Society members making their own determination.

The pair stopped arguing, and instead tried to make a good impression. Flint took care of talking with first responders, while Kaede took over to explain how she used their powers and what to be wary of when getting the robbers out of their car. They took off, rocketing away with their Nova powers, and landed on a nearby roof.

It was then that Flame Dancer approached.

Flint couldn't be more excited.

"Holy shit," he said as she landed on the same roof, the current of flame that had borne her aloft slowly dying, the heat disappearing. "You're Flame Dancer."

"And you must be Nova," Flame Dancer said. Her hair was bright ginger, her yellow and orange costume form fitting, displaying her athletic form in a similar manner to Nova's. She was in her mid-to-late thirties, yet had the air and command of someone far more senior. Flint, for all that he had been an alpha male until recently, found himself in awe of her.

"I'm - I'm a really big fan," he said in a surprisingly girlish tone. He even pushed some hairs behind his ear. "I literally had a dream I met you only, like, a week ago. That was before I got these sick superpowers and everything."

Flame Dancer had a slight smirk on her features, and Kaede had a similar one on her mental features, not that she could express them while Flint was in control.

"Well, that's very nice of you to say, Nova. I'm sorry to say I hadn't heard of you until recently. I've been kept informed of you since, however. As you know, I'm the leader of the Hero Society-"

"Which is so fucking awesome, y'all."

"Let her finish, cave-brain."

"-and occasionally I like to stretch my limbs, break out the fire, and actually get out in the field and assess potential recruits. That's you, obviously."

"Finally. Took them long enough. We must have made a good impression."

"I'd be honoured! Look, I really wanna join the Hero Society. I just gotta. It's badass and as you can see I'm a hot female superhero and I got this cool costume and-"

Flame Dancer laughed and put up her hands. "Woah, slow down! Slow down. There's still a lot of assessment to go through before we get you inside the Hero Dome. We've had infiltrations, sabotage agents, wild cards, psychotics, all of it in the past. Even had someone with a sorta split personality."

"Don't say a word, Flint."

"I won't."

Flame Dancer frowned. "What?"

"I mean, I won't let you down. This chance down. Ma'am."

She pursed her lips. "Good. You keep up your good work. Think of me as a mentor of sorts from now on. Someone to keep track of you and your progress, *if* you want to join the Hero Society."

"I do," Flint said. "I really do."

"Good to know. Let's go with a few missions together in coming days, huh? Some field trips around Star City and you can show me how your powers work. Then, well, we'll see where things go from there."

Flint and Kaede grinned together. For a moment they were two and one, they were *Nova*.

"Sounds like a plan," they said.

Issue 5#: Hero Membership

Dave was waiting in the park at midnight, just as Flint and Kaede had organised with him via text. He was his usual handsome self, occasionally checking his watch but never his phone: Flint often felt like his mind went a mile a minute, but Dave had always been a patient kinda guy. He waited by the park light next to the bench, alone in this empty space.

Flint couldn't resist a touch of drama, and while she preferred no nonsense practicality, neither could Kaede in this regard: they both reached out with their power and increased the power of the park light above Dave's head. The tall, ginger-haired man looked up as the light turned a celestial gold, so bright it was almost impossible to look at.

That was when they landed, jumping from the nearby tree and using their fusion rocket ability to slow their descent. They were in full costume: tight gold fabric with the white jacket over the top, the atomic symbol on their lovely chest. But they didn't wear a helmet, leaving their loose afro hanging near to their shoulders.

"Hey, dude," Flint said, placing a hand on his hip and cocking it almost suggestively. "Long time, no see."

"Holy fuck!" Dave cried. He jumped back, but only for a moment. Then he approached, looking the pair of them over, his eyes roaming up and down. Flint and Kaede felt their minds briefly in sync again; they both realised they *liked* the roaming.

"So . . . how?"

The pair grinned together, and without even thinking cocked their hip to the other side and thrust their chest out a little. Flint was shorter than he had been, but that didn't seem so bad right now.

"I might let Kaede explain that one. She's here too."

"Wait, you weren't kidding? You've got like a split personality thing going?"

"Sort of. I'll be Kaede for a tick. Try not to perv on my tits too much while she's talking. She's a real smart cookie."

They switched control and Kaede assumed a much more stoic air, standing less familiarly in the presence of Dave but not exactly hiding how beautiful and impressive their shared body now was.

"Hello David," she said, making him raise his eyebrows. "I'm Kaede Yamamoto. Nice to meet you. Because *someone* let loose our secret, now I have to fill you in on the science of it. See if you can follow along."

Dave tried. At least, Flint could tell he was trying. Kaede had to repeat her explanation numerous times, going over minute points and then answering his various questions, some of which were far more immature than she would have liked. Immature . . . or biological.

"So does this mean you're a hermaphrodite?"

"What!?! No! Tell him no!"

"We are biologically female. That means we possess only female characteristics, including a fully formed vagina."

"Wow. And you rotate control, huh? Does that mean Flint's been playing with the boobs when he has a chance?"

"No, he hasn't," Kaede lied. Flint took control back and gave his friend the double thumbs-up. "Hell yeah I have, dude!"

"Oh man, that's definitely you speaking bro! Holy shit, this is weird. But . . . you survived! You actually survived!"

He hugged his friend, and Flint hugged him back. Kaede, existing in the passenger seat, found it hard not to get swept up in the emotion of the moment. She found herself overlapping with Flint, embracing the hug. How long had it been since she'd been hugged? Jesus, the last time had been years ago. At her parents' funeral.

She hugged extra hard, adding emotion to Flint's grip, and some connection too. It felt so very warm.

"I survived, bro," Flint continued. "But it's a weird-as-fuck survival, I can tell ya that. Sharing a body? Having to go underground?"

Dave pulled away from them, just a little. It was almost disappointing. "But why? Why not just go public with it?"

"Dude, I'd lose my career! And no one would ever let me forget it!"

"And any scientific achievements I have in the future will be completely overshadowed."

"Yeah, and Kaede's got her reasons too. Our only hope - and it's a long shot, man - is to get access to the fusion chamber again. The Hero Society can help us, but we want only them to know; no press or anything."

"Makes sense. Geez, this is a weird one."

"You're telling me. I'm two weeks out from getting a period."

"Don't tell him that!" Kaede said, switching control. "Kaede in control again. I trust you can keep this on the 'downlow', as you might put it? We can't have this getting out."

“Of course! I’d never tell on my best friend. Or, uh, my best friend’s body-neighbour? Look, can we at least keep meeting up? I miss you - Flint, I mean - and this is pretty wild. Like, even if it’s only occasionally, I’m sure-”

“YES!” they said together, before realising how overly enthusiastic they had just been. “Uh, we’re both okay with that, we mean.”

“Fuck yeah. Can you, like, show me some of your powers.”

Even Kaede grinned at that.

“How would you like to see that rock over there get turned into a giant marshmallow?”

Another week, and another spider attack, this time across town. It was clear that the mutant spider things were hiding in the sewer tunnels under the city, but they were a complex maze, and Blue Trident had apparently been ambushed by a screeching horde and only just managed to escape with his life. Meteor Woman was across the world helping with some kind of volcano disaster, and the Hero Society were concerned with the growing ranks of the Brotherhood of Civility, a very polite yet very scary group of well-mannered psychos.

Nova knew all of this because Flame Dancer had told her some of it, and the more they fought together and tackled street crime, the more the Hero Society leader was happy to fill her in. Just two and a half weeks after Kaede and Flint had become one, the pair were fighting the Masked Menace, a rather appropriately named villain who had a penchant for deadly pranks on the city’s populace. Normally he was an adversary of the Jester, but Flame Dancer wanted to try Nova against more low-level menace.

“Welllllll, if it isn’t the new hero on the block!” the Masked Menace declared inside his warehouse lair, stocked with numerous ‘pranks’ and explosive fireworks. “Are you sinking your *teeth* into the job, hm?”

He flung out a pair of chattering teeth, ones with metal incisors that snapped as Nova’s costume. Together, the pair used their powers to melt them to little more than liquid, but the Masked Menace was already activating a lever.

“Ah, what an *acidic*-looking power you’ve got there!”

An enormous blast of acid rocketed from a series of nearby pipes, taking the pair of them completely by surprise. It seared their skin, causing their minds to separate as they both howled in pain. Only the quick thinking of Kaede managed to shift the molecular structure of their clothing to thick rubber, sheltering them from further pain. Fusion energy healed their skin while they rocketed forward. The Masked Menace was quick, dodging their blasts to one side and removing a series of bouncing balls from his tuxedo. They covered

the flow and began to bounce, ricocheting like mad around the room until they were like bullets. They pelted against windows, metal frames, against the concrete flooring and then against Nova. She screamed out as they hit her every whichaway. The Masked Menace cackled, running for the exit.

It was Flint who gave them the push they needed. Their merged Nova consciousness ignored the pain and pushed through, just as he always had on the field. The ricocheting balls were crashing all over the place, but the Masked Menace was the target. He was already drawing out a series of tied ribbons from his sleeve, no doubt preparing some kind of strangling effect, but instead Nova grabbed the ribbon and flicked it around him. It glowed in response to her touch, turning to hard iron.

“Oof! Well, well, well, if that isn’t a clever new hero. But dare I say, she may be a-”

“And shut up, too,” Nova said, grabbing his pocket corner and stuffing in his mouth. “And don’t do anything else, or I’ll turn *that* into a bunch of venomous spiders.”

His eyes went wide, and the villain finally shut up. It was only at that point that Flame Dancer descended, having been waiting in the wings the whole time. She was clapping her hands, and both Flint and Kaede took that in as their minds separated again.

“Very nicely done!” she announced, then activated something on her wrist. Several ARTEMIS agents entered and dragged the villain away, who had been totally silent. “Can you really turn a pocket square into venomous spiders?”

“Definitely not,” Kaede answered. “We cannot affect living tissue, and it would be morally wrong regardless.”

“But badass if we could.”

Kaede ignored him. “The better question is, why didn’t you tell me you were having us - followed?”

“Because I needed to be sure you were on the same level. The same reason we were scanning for any brain alteration, hypnosis, or suggestion technology, and that you weren’t a robot.”

Kaede blinked. “Does that happen often?”

“Far more than you’d think. Look, the Hero Society is *the* superhero organisation of America, with connections and branches across the world. We have to be careful with our membership and potential spies. I don’t think, by the way, that you’re a spy. But it does mean that we have to be careful, and I hope you understand that.”

“Yeah, way too well,” Flint said to Kaede. *“We’ve been waiting way too fucking long for this moment, man.”*

“Of course we understand that,” Kaede said.

Flame Dancer frowned. "You always say that: 'we.' I haven't detected any mechanical device on your person. Some heroes have a 'man on the line,' of sorts. Is there a reason you say 'we'?"

Kaede paused, not knowing how to progress. Flint took over and tried to look casual.

"Nah, man," he said, using a new inflection. "I - we - just kinda like having that as the official hero voice. I got the gold costume, the radiant lightning. Was thinking of making it, uh, Princess Nova or something."

Flame Dancer raised an eyebrow. "*Riiiiight*. I'd stick to just 'Nova,' for now. Trust me, I went by 'Queen Fire' back in my early days, and some people can be real misogynistic assholes when you add royalty to your title. For some totally mysterious reason, the Monkey King doesn't get that kind of hate."

"Uh-huh. Yeah. Misogyny blows, right? All those awful men staring at how goddamn sexy we are. All that . . . slapping. Groping. Catcalling. The wage gap. Can't vote sometimes-"

"*Tone it down.*"

"The whole history, you know how it is."

Flame Dancer kept her eyebrow raised. "Yeah, sexism sucks. Definitely. I think what I've experienced clearly differs from you, though. Look, the point I'm making is, you're welcome to join the Hero Society-"

"Yes!" they said together, merging for a moment.

"On a *provisional* basis. You're still under my mentorship, no access to areas like the armoury, etcetera."

Perhaps it was just that Flint had a lot of estrogen running through his system. Perhaps it was just his natural emotions mingling with Kaede's. At that moment, he didn't care, and neither did Kaede.

They hugged Flame Dancer and held her tight, just like they had Dave. Kaede soaked it all in, and Flint felt like he was part of a team again.

The Hero Dome was astonishingly impressive. Numerous established heroes and their wards, not to mention the extensive regular human staff, populated the lower regions. Many of them even *flew*, and it took every ounce of Kaede's will to prevent Flint from doing the same. The large television screens showed footage of recent victories and achievements: Power Girl plugging the exploding volcano off the coast of Papua New Guinea, The Jester foiling a bank robber in a rather comical manner, and even a group of heroes led by Blue Trident dispatching yet *another* attack by the strange mutant spider creatures.

"Damn, those things are everywhere now," Flint remarked.

"Curious. Of course, we have other concerns in mind."

"Yeah, I know. How fucking amazing is this place?"

Kaede followed Flint's vision as they went up the elevator to the third floor. *"Fairly amazing. And they have our fusion chamber in the armoury."*

"Your fusion chamber."

But Kaede sent him a surprisingly warm glow. *"No, we have the same body. And . . . you're smarter than I thought you were, cave-brain. Smarter than you think, too. While we're like this, it's our chamber. If . . . that's okay with you."*

Flint smiled. "Hell, if it gets me that credit!"

She giggled in his mind. It was a pleasant feeling, and they both enjoyed it.

"Nova! There you are!" Flame Dancer parted from Lightning Lass and Signet Lass, the couple that were, seemingly, in a relationship with one another, at least according to the press. She gave some words to her coworkers, something about these damn spider attacks, and then joined them. "Welcome to the Hero Dome. What do you think?"

Their eyes went straight to the upper floors, off-limits for now, where the armoury was located. The storage vault that would hold the fusion chamber technology, and the resources to rebuild it.

"We're very glad to be here," Kaede said, moving from the passenger seat. "We're ready to be a hero."

"That's great to hear," Flame Dancer said. "But there's one other hoop I need you to jump through with those rocket-feet of yours. Something unofficial that we need to talk about. Come with me."

They followed her. Kaede was astonished at how much she was getting used to this fitter, more attractive body. People stared at her as she went past, even other attractive heroes, and certainly a lot of the male staff. Yes, she was new, and yes, she wore a flashy gold thanks to Flint, but her hips now had a dynamite sway to them, and she did *look* good. She'd never put much stock into such things.

"Flint?"

"Yeah."

"Are you feeling kinda . . . cool?"

"You know, this is pretty wild to admit, but hell yeah I am. I mean, maybe it's just all this estrogen, but I think we're fucking rockin' this female body, y'all."

They both melded for a moment, feeling one another's confidence, their shared feminine pride. Flint wasn't even ashamed to be a woman or share this body; hell, it actually made things more cozy and meant he always had company, and the solitary Kaede was starting to feel the same way.

Which made it all the more of a whiplash when Flame Dancer led them outside to a private balcony, shut the door, and then folded her arms. Her powers turned on, turning her hair to flame and a low burning effect across her costume and skin.

“So, out with it,” she said.

“Out with . . ?” Kaede said.

“The truth. I’ve sensed nothing but good intentions from you, Nova, and I haven’t pried into your secret identity because, unless you are a spy or criminal, it’s none of my business. But things aren’t adding up with you, and I can tell when someone is hiding something they shouldn’t. You want to join the Hero Society? Well, I’m its leader, and I get to decide who joins. I can’t trust someone to have my back against a horde of mutant spiders if I don’t know what weird issue is troubling them. So, out with it.”

Together, they sighed. They became Nova, minds merging together as they knew what needed to be done. With a heavy sigh, one that only reminded them how womanly their body had become, they began to admit the truth.

“Okay, this is going to sound crazy, but we used to look . . . different. We weren’t always, well . . .”

Nova ran her hands down her body and over her hips for emphasis. At this, Flame Dancer did something unexpected: she slapped her forehead and groaned.

“Oh God, you used to be a man, didn’t you?”

That gave Nova pause. “You - how did you-”

“It happens more often than you would expect, though I’m not at liberty to say *who* in our ranks was once a man. So what, some kind of experiment turned you into a woman?”

“Sort of,” Nova answered. “It’s more complicated than that. You see, our powers are fusion based and-”

But Flame Dancer was already ahead of them, her eyes widening as she connected the dots. “Sweet Jesus, how did I not see it already? You’re powers, they’re fusion-based, aren’t they? You’re not one person, you’re two. The two who were killed in the fusion accident, but you weren’t killed at all! That’s you!”

“I - fuck.” It wasn’t even Flint who’d said it.

“Not wrong, sister.”

“That’s why you say ‘we.’ Damn, and you haven’t gone to the police about this?”

“We don’t want the media attention!” Flint said after Kaede relinquished control to him. “That’s why we gotta get to that armoury, so Kaede can do her business and separate us, aight? I’m meant to be a football player, and she’s gonna change the world with her crazy-ass brilliant mind.”

"That's . . . oddly sweet. Thank you."

"Well, it's true - that's me talking to Kaede. She's brilliant. She deserves better than some big lug with her."

"Honestly, I couldn't imagine a better partner, Flint. You've helped me right out of my strangled little comfort zone."

"Well, you helped me be a little more aware. A bit smarter, and even learn a thing or two."

Flame Dancer waved her hands. "Hey! I can't understand what half of you . . . two, are saying. So why don't we get you to that armoury and try to do what we can, huh?"

Kaede and Flint grinned together, and they were Nova once more.

"Sounds like a plan. But we're only a provisional member. Can you even give us access?"

Flame Dancer snorted. "Please, I won the vote for leadership and beat Blue Trident's ass by a twenty percent margin. I can open any door in this building to the Society of Sin if I wanted to. C'mon. Let's get you turned back. And, for God's sake, let's get you a new identity so you can have something approaching a normal life."

A normal life. It almost sounded like a dream.

Issue #6: This is a Normal Life?

It was a very odd experience for both Flint and Kaede, to be walking back onto the college campus. It was like returning home after being away for years, only to find that the thing that had changed was *you*.

"Did we wear something wrong?" Flint asked. *"Lots of people are staring at us."*

"It's because we're quite strikingly attractive, cave-brain," Kaede whispered under her breath. "And because you've got me into the pattern of walking like *this*. You, a man of all things."

"Not a man much these days, huh?"

She smirked, and he joined her in the act, making it a full blown smile.

"Certainly not."

Felicity Yataka strolled across the campus, swaying her hips from side to side. Her tight jeans did well to outline her impressive backside and muscular thighs. She wore only a crop top beneath her leather jacket, and her breasts jiggled just slightly, enough for passerby men to appreciate. Their hair was pulled back loosely with a band, leaving an expanse of

curls to bounce against his neck. Neither had said it out loud, but they were *proud* to look and feel so good.

The Hero Society and ARTEMIS had done good work. An entirely new identity built from the ground up, logged into the government's systems, and all the necessary paperwork, identification, and course enrollments taken care of. As far as the dean and the senior staff were all concerned, Felicity Yataka was a brilliant transfer student who was incredibly capable in physics, mathematics, and a myriad of other subjects. Yet she also came with impressive athletic skills, a history of accomplishments in track running and women's basketball. Flint was especially proud of that. They both were.

It was a good freedom to possess. Yes, their focus was on working with the fusion tech that the Hero Society had allowed them access to. Yes, they were still Nova when they could be, expanding their understanding of their powers and each other. But now they could have a human life again too, a sense of normality while Kaede did her thing with the science and Flint did his best to assist her.

"You know, I think I'm starting to get this fusion tech thing," Flint thought. *"Maybe I'm just, like, some kinda dumbass, but I think I even understand how it works a bit."*

"Of course you do," Kaede whispered, turning towards their lecture theatre. "We're part of each other, now. Just like I'm starting to get interested in the idea of doing sports with you."

Flint chuckled mentally. *"Does that mean we're gonna be stuck, melded together? Fused permanently?"*

"Maybe. I don't think so. I just think . . . we understand each other."

She sent a warm feeling to him, and he returned it. This was also something they were capable of doing more often. The connection between them had continued to expand, and sometimes it was almost unclear who was in control of their shared female body: they flowed back and forth like water, as if they were no longer warring voices or even debating ones.

They were a conversation.

There was something so very beautiful about that.

They left their second lecture of the day feeling invigorated. True, they didn't really *need* to be so attentive, and they weren't: while Flint educated himself further on advanced physics, Kaede made mental to-do lists for their fusion chamber repair, and even considered other things, such as what they might wear the next day. She felt more . . . feminine lately, which was ironic given that it was a man being merged with her that had made her so. She'd never

been an adaptable person, but Flint was. She marvelled at how he was able to get used to being Felicity, how he learned to put on a bra each morning and adjust their hair and even use makeup. Perhaps some of her knowledge was bleeding over to him, just as his bled to her, but it was more than that: he rolled with the punches, and she was learning from him.

It left her with a brilliant smile on her face as she walked their body out of the lecture theatre, intent on heading to the cafe for a drink. It was where she and Flint had agreed to meet Dave. He was waiting for them, and once more his face lit up at their presence. It caused Kaede to blush, and she could feel Flint experiencing a similar emotion. Funny, how much *he* had changed as well.

"I've got your favourite!" he declared. "Um, I think it's your favourite, at least? Flint always loved a good cappuccino."

"Let me try it, then," Kaede said, "and I'll tell you what she thinks. He, I mean."

She drank it, and it did taste good.

"Damn, that's nice."

"Agreed," she said, before looking to Dave. "Flint says it's damn nice. He also says you look pretty cute."

"I did not!"

"Well, he was thinking it. We both were, a little."

Dave blushed, but Kaede was feeling more socially capable. "Wanna go for a walk with us? Might be easier to talk about everything without loads of people around. Besides, it'll be nice."

The ginger-haired man blinked. "Well, I don't have an accounting lecture for another hour and a half, so why not? You, uh, you look really good too, you know. You and Flint both."

Flint fumed within Kaede, but didn't say a word. After all, he was also feeling their shared body's attraction to their friend. He really did have sexy shoulders. The pair (trio, really) walked across the campus green and then left the grounds entirely, heading further through town and making it to the same park they'd first reacquainted at. Conversation was a little difficult at first, and more between Kaede and Flint than between either of them and Dave, but slowly Flint's best friend opened up a little more. The talk about coffee and how nice the weather was and what courses they were taking took a backstage to more intimate matters.

"So, you're Felicity right now. Was that your choice, Kaede?"

"Actually, it was mine, dude," Flint answered. "It's me by the way."

Dave actually laughed. "Yeah man, I can tell. You've got this cadence in your voice when it's you in control. Way less formal."

“Damn straight. Sorry about that weird comment Kaede made about you, you know, back at the coffee place. She can get a bit funny. She likes teasing me like that, that’s all.”

Dave shrugged as they entered the park. “I didn’t mind it. It was actually kind of nice. I’m trying not to shoot myself in the foot here, but I meant what I said before: you look really nice. Actually . . . you look really beautiful. Sorry if that’s too weird, but I can’t lie, man.”

Flint bit his lip, he reached out to Kaede for guidance.

“Don’t ask me how to proceed. I’m not good at this social stuff!”

“But you started this!” he hissed. Dave didn’t respond, clearly understanding a private conversation was happening.

“That was me being socially assertive and putting it out there, like you’ve taught me! It doesn’t mean I know how to go on from there!”

“Goddamnit.”

“Everything okay, dude? It’s still you, right, Flint?”

“Yeah. It’s just . . . shit’s complicated. We’re working on a way to be separated again, and that might not even work. And now y’all are calling us beautiful, and you ain’t wrong. I mean, look at us, bro! We look *hot*. We’re dressing hot. We’ve got our belly button out here, and these jeans are *tight*. But it’s still kinda . . . odd to hear you say that about us. Even if it makes us feel . . .”

Dave paused, and so did they. They were right beside a beautiful bed of flowers by a babbling stream, and they couldn’t imagine a more romantic spot in that moment.

“Feel what?” he asked.

Flint and Kaede trembled together. She sent him encouragement, but when he couldn’t speak, she took over.

“It makes us feel wanted,” she replied. “I’ve not felt wanted before, Dave. Not since I was a young girl.”

“Kaede,” he said.

She nodded. “But this comes from both of us. Our minds overlap. We feel what each other feels, and we . . . we both like the look of you.”

At this, she couldn’t help but give a sheepish smile, and Dave returned it.

“Sorry, I shouldn’t have called you beautiful. Look, I’m just glad you’re both alive. That means you too, Kaede. I was terrified I’d lost my best friend, and while I don’t know you nearly as well, if you’re keeping my boy here alive and working with him, then that makes you a friend of mine, too.”

She stuck out her hand. “Friends, then.”

He shook it, and Flint moaned a little, mentally, in her mind. She too savoured the strong grip. It almost made their Nova powers briefly flare. Could it be that having two minds could make one twice as aroused in such situations?

“We should get to know one another more,” Kaede ventured, still dipping her toes in the pond of social connection. “I’d like to get to know Flint’s friend.”

“And I’d like to know her, and to talk to Flint as well. You still in there, buddy?”

The embarrassed Flint returned, and rather cutely swept some curly hair from his afro behind his ear.

“Yeah, I’m here, man. I was just in the passenger seat while Kaede fixed up all that embarrassing shit I said.”

“Well, let’s meet for dinner. We’ll go out, both of us! All three of us, I guess? I guess it’s a saving on the bill, right? Two minds but you only have to eat for one, huh?”

The pair laughed together, minds merging.

“You have no idea how wrong that is!” Felicity said.

So it wasn’t a normal life, not really. Felicity Yataka was still two people, often two minds about some things, together in sync with others. They caught up with Dave on campus, who they had agreed to go out with for dinner at the end of the week, and they worked with Flame Dancer whenever they weren’t studying, or whenever their watch beeped. The Hero Society’s demands were constant, especially with the need to also look over the fusion chamber. With the supplies from the Hero Society and her budding analysis of what had occurred, Kaede was slowly recreating the device and working on theories on how to divide them once more. But it didn’t have the same level of . . . emergency that it once had. In fact, they often took breaks to experiment with their own powers of matter transmutation and energy creation, and Flint was reading more and more, gaining knowledge he never could have imagined for himself. Kaede still called him ‘cave-brain,’ but it was far more affectionate a title now. In turn, he called her ‘egghead,’ despite the fact that they now shared the same head. It made for more playful banter as they battled villains and helped with crisis management under Flame Dancer’s direction.

“You two are doing great!” she declared. “I’ll be sad to lose you. I can’t say I’ve had many mentees with as much zest for expanding their abilities and testing their limits as the pair of you. What a shame you aren’t two superheroes.”

“We are,” they’d said as Nova, simply and surely. To them, it was a fact.

“Well, I guess you are,” Flame Dancer had said.

It was true. And yet they were more than that, and less. The pair were as much in a relationship with one another as any two people could be. When they woke together in the morning, they had even started sending warm feelings of connection to one another, even hugging their beautiful form and cupping their breasts in a playful tease.

“Good morning, you,” Kaede often said.

“*Good morning yourself,*” Flint would reply. “*Mhmm. Does my mental voice sound more female to you today?*”

“It does. But then . . . I think we both feel more female today. That dream . . .”

“*God, that fucking dream, dude. Dave’s hands all over us. His cock . . . I don’t even care if this makes me gay, I’m feeling so goddamn wet over it.*”

“We’re both wet over it,” she replied.

“*A shame we can’t-*”

Kaede placed her hand down between their thighs and began to rub. It brought them both to pleasure, and made Flint whimper in her mind.

“We can,” she replied. “Because I want this. I shouldn’t have denied us this for so long.”

“*Mhmmm. Damn right you shouldn’t! But - ahhh. I’m glad you d-did. I wouldn’t have appreciated it before with you, Kaede. I wouldn’t - mmhm! - have appreciated us.*”

Kaede grinned like a girl after her first, best date, then continued to pleasure their shared body. They tossed and turned in the bed, their control flowing between them like liquid, passing easily back and forth so they could both partake. Somewhere in the mix they became one, no longer Flint and Kaede but simply *Felicity*, a shared mind. A beautiful, perfect mind. One that knew its own body perfectly, and could play it like an instrument.

When the orgasm came, the woman howled with pleasure familiar and unfamiliar, glorious and female. They were together, and their desire and passion mingled in an ever arcing and coiling set of consciousnesses, like the helix model of a DNA: shared and connected, but turning clockwise around the other.

They only separated when the mindblowing orgasms ended.

“I love you,” Kaede whispered aloud.

“*I love you too,*” Flint said, meaning every word. “*Egghead.*”

She giggled, holding herself, gleeful and joyous, uncaring of how silly she felt. “My cave-brain.”

How best to explain it to Dave? The man clearly liked them, and had increasingly talked with Kaede; their shared love of mathematics made them a real pair of nerds. And Flint had been his best friend forever. And they both liked him, with Kaede more able to admit it thanks to a) having always been a woman and b) actively pushing to be more social and forward as Flint’s side had taught her. Just as Flint had dragged her out of her comfort zone, she was dragging him out of his.

But how to possibly explain the strange truth they had finally admitted, that they loved one another? How could they *not*, when they shared the same body and experienced connection on a wavelength no other human had or even *could*. They shared their pain, their pleasure, the most intimate and embarrassing and tender moments. They giggled as they watched silly action movies Flint loved and marvelled at the discoveries of scientists that Kaede wished she could meet. And when they took to the skies as Nova, looking down upon the city and soaring through the clouds, they gave literal heat to one another, lighting and warming their way.

It was beautiful, and could never be fully expressed. But it also meant something more; that they also shared *desire*. Both of them, in equal measure, desired Dave. He was nerdy in his love of numbers, yet had the team spirit and manliness that Flint had enjoyed in camaraderie and now with a sense of attraction.

"Are you sure about this?" Flint asked as they approached the restaurant.

"A good scientist is never sure of anything. But a woman knows that any experiment in attracting a man can be heavily influenced by the right dress. And this, my loving cave-brain, is the right dress."

It damn well was. It was golden and strapless, emphasising their chest and pushing it up so that they looked to have D-cups instead of C's. It pulled tight around their waist but formed a loose dress down to their legs, but had a slit on the side. It was a mirror to their Nova uniform, but with their makeup and jewellery, on one would notice the comparison. They'd just see the beauty.

"Okay then," Flint whispered. "Here we go then. Let's be Felicity."

Their minds merged, their wants in alignment, and they stepped through the door and into the restaurant. She immediately spotted Dave: he stood upon seeing her, his jaw dropped, his eyes wandering over Felicity's deeply hot body. She grinned - she had a very beaming smile - and sauntered over to him.

"Holy hell," Dave said. "I feel underdressed."

"Don't be," she said, daring to kiss him on the cheek. "You look fabulous. I love the lined shirt. It emphasises your muscles."

"I - wow. Yeah. Thanks. Who am I, uh, talking to right now?"

She fluttered her eyelashes as he pulled back her seat for her. She sat down, breathing heavily on purpose to attract his eyes to her chest.

"Both of us, Dave," she said. "We're both talking to you. And we'd like you to order us some wine so we can have a fun night together."

He did so immediately, and not long after the red was served up. Felicity found it hard not to stare into his eyes, and he was the same. They talked of college, of the craziness of Felicity's situation - their booth was away from others by his request - and even the Hero

Society and how Flame Dancer was. Felicity was more than happy to talk about how she'd helped them come into their own, and how they were on the cusp of a discovery with their fusion device.

"Wow, that close? I'm - this is gonna be really weird to say, but is it bad to admit that I'm kinda disappointed? I feel like I'm getting to know a whole new person - or persons - and seeing new sides to the guy I once knew. And, I won't lie, you look damn good, too."

"The best, y'all" she said, circling her finger around her drink. "You know, man, there's something I've been meaning to tell you. From both of us. It's why we're so in sync at the moment, actually. We haven't been doing as much work on the fusion chamber as we should have lately. Delaying it, in fact. And I'll just come out and say it: we're not too sure if we *want* to turn back. This is a whole new level of existence, and we like sharing this badass connection we've got."

"But . . . wouldn't you want your own life?"

"This is better. I know that's a crazy ass thing to say, but it is. We love one another."

Dave looked confused and disappointed. "You love . . . each other?"

"We do. And the truth is . . . we were also thinking about whether you wanted to-"

They were interrupted by a terrible crash and a horrific set of screams. Felicity jumped from her seat, ready to activate her power.

The mutant spiders were crawling into the restaurant and heading straight toward her.

Issue #7: Connections

"Watch out!" Felicity cried. Both parts of her needed to keep Dave safe. They activated their powers just subtly enough to rocket him away from the advancing spiders, then hoisted up a table to cover them.

"Get to safety as soon as you can!" she said.

"Shit, are those the crazy giant spiders?"

"Dave, listen to us! Get to safety, okay? We'll handle this."

She generated her suit over her skin, out of sight of both security cameras and other customers, not that anyone was focusing on her now. For just a split second she hesitated, but both parts of her were worried, and didn't want to hold back any longer. They grabbed Dave and kissed him on the lips.

"Stay safe, dude!" she cried, and then leapt over the table to fire two beams at the encouraging creatures. They glowed with multicoloured hues, their limbs skittering about.

Their faces were alien: just four eyes instead of eight, and with gnashing mouths with odd probosci that continuing to probe, splitting apart wood with the sheer force. One of them looked about ready to split a poor older woman's skull, so Nova focused her powers on that one first. She crashed into it, jettisoning it out of the restaurant with a directed explosion of her power. One jumped onto her back and began to claw at her, and Nova had to pry it off, flying around the room and causing further chaos. Screams were everywhere, but she couldn't lose control, not while people were in-

SCREEEEEEEECH

The monster's psychic power beamed right into her mind, causing her to scream with it. Both of their minds separated, Flint and Kaede flinging to the other sides of their shared conscious network. It was a *full* split, and left them flailing in the dark, their shared body spasming out of control, as if they both had control, and neither had control either.

"What's happening!?" Flint yelled

"I don't know! That scream! It was like a shriek of agony! UGH!"

"I can barely control anything!"

"Me either!"

Another shriek followed, leaving them to fall to their knees, clutching their head even as the spiders began to regain their momentum. They swarmed through the restaurant, and more customers screamed, unable to escape. Flint and Kaede were in the darkness. Imagery poured through their mind even as the spider gnashed into their shoulder, taking meaty chunks from it.

Pain.

Solitude.

Fractal splits.

Loss of unity.

Flint saw a football team failing to work together, their communication breaking down.

Kaede saw an equation that didn't make sense, its components failing to align.

What was even happening?

They were saved only by a fiery red blast. It was Flame Dancer, along with several other heroes, including Signet Lance and Lightning Lass and Lady Gaia, all of them working together to save the restaurant staff and customers, including Dave. The spiders shrieked, but only Nova was affected, her paired minds stumbling towards one another.

Flame Dancer's hand fell upon their shoulder. Her voice echoed, warbled and wrong like she was speaking underwater in a sea of molasses.

"Are you okay?" they managed to hear. *"Nova! Get your minds together!"*

Her voice was enough to anchor them, as well as seeing Dave being pulled to safety by the burly knight hero Signet Lance. Their minds fell in sync again, though there was still some degree of separation.

"We're - we're fine," Nova said, gathering herself up. "I'm sorry, I don't understand what happened. Some kind of psychic screech? How did y'all get here so fast anyhow?"

"We've been tracking their movements. They seem to strike at random, but always from the sewers. We're sending a team down there now. It must be some kind of mutant infestation. Probably the Sewer Rat at work with his experiments again. You stay here and-"

"No!"

They were surprised at their own attitude, and clearly Flame Dancer was too. She put her hand on Nova's shoulder.

"Look, you've been through a lot, and you've been working yourself ragged to separate from, well, yourself. Given that their power can somehow affect yours negatively, I think it's best you sit this one out, okay?"

But Nova's mind was racing. Both had different parts of the puzzle, and now that they were paired together again, the golden-suited heroine was working it out. The psychic screech, the equations that weren't working, the feelings of solitude and failed teamwork. It all pointed to something . . . something only *she* could figure out.

"Flame Dancer, I need to go down there. Alone. I think . . . I think we can trace where the freakin' mutant spiders are coming from, like a signal. And I think . . . I think there's something more going on. Something only we can figure out and solve. Please, ya'll gotta trust me. I know it's just some fucking instinct, but it's a strong one."

The leader of the Hero Society furrowed her brow. "You've got twenty minutes, that's all I can give you. Then I and the other heroes go down. We'll set up a cordon."

Nova exhaled. "Thank you, for trusting me."

"Earn that trust, then."

"You know, I always thought you were the coolest and hottest of the heroes."

Flame Dancer smirked. "I take it that's Flint talking."

"Definitely. But right now, we're Nova."

They would have to be. The spiders, what was left of them, were retreating back into the sewers. It was time to meet them on their turf.

Nova flew, engaging her fusion power to fly straight down a manhole, turning it to liquid so she could pass straight through it. It made her Flint side appreciate how lithe her form was to easily fit through, and their shared elegance as they flew through the tunnels beneath the city. Despite the grime and grit below, they were able to keep themselves clean. Their shoulder was already healed, their costume knitted back together, and they had a sense of renewed confidence. This was *them*. Female and beautiful, powerful and heroic.

Nothing in Flint's mind wanted to go back, not even to being a man. And the same was true of Kaede, who submerged herself into Flint's consciousness, their partnership whole.

The psychic screech came. It nearly separated them again, but they were ready for it this time. Ready to *listen*.

Pain.

Confusion.

Scattered mind.

Sensations they knew all too well. Sensations they had weathered in the last month and managed to come out the other side of, even stronger. Nova raced towards the signal. She smashed through old boards and ruined stone, flew past spiders that were guarding the one above all. They didn't fight any of them, instead dodging their lunges. They entered abandoned areas, moving through sealed doors that only an intelligence could operate, through disguises only organisation could form.

"*We're coming up on it,*" they thought together. "*Are we ready?*"

"Of course," they replied.

Nova melted stone and reformed it behind her, entering an old tram station that had long been abandoned. Abandoned once, but no longer. Now, it *teemed* with the mutant spiders, each the size of pigs, all in strange unnatural hues that seemed to shimmer and glow in slightly metallic ways. Even larger ones were present, some the size of entire cows. But in the centre of the space, having upended a tram entirely and formed a large mould-like web, alien and strange, was what could only be the central intelligence.

The largest spider of all.

It had a large egg sac, and six great red eyes. Its skin was pallid and pale, its exterior sickly and *wrong*. It had more limbs than its children, at least twelve, and the front four were at least ten metres long each. The creature was bigger than the tram it had displayed.

And it was shaking.

The spiders moved up to defend their mother and master. This would be the site of the big battle. The place where Flame Dancer and her cohort would finally root out this evil infestation. Nova had the power now to do it herself. She could easily atomise everything here.

Instead, she turned off her powers except for a shimmering light in her hand to be able to see, and dropped to the ground before the queen.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I didn't realise at first. None of us did."

The queen shook, trembled. Psychic waves lashed out from it, battering them, but they managed to keep themselves together.

Confusion.

Scattering.

Noise. Endless noise.

“We’re the only ones you can talk to, aren’t we?” Nova said. “The only ones that can understand you. A mind network, like your own.”

She gestured to the queen’s children, who shivered. Some of them were erratic. One was bumping straight into a pillar. Another was shaking as if having a fit.

PAIN. CANNOT UNDERSTAND. SO MANY NOISES. SO MUCH SCATTERING.

“I know! We both do! We were freakin’ fused together, and it took us a whole-ass time to figure it out, but you’re *meant* to be this way, ain’t you? Where are you from?”

More images followed. *DARK SKY. ENDLESS TRAVEL. YAWNING VOIDS AND GLITTERING LANTERNS. TRAVELLERS. THE ROCK TAKES US ACROSS THE VOID, AND WE SPREAD. IT IS OUR WAY. WE ARE PEACEFUL. BUT HERE . . . VIOLENT MIND. SCATTERED MIND. SO MANY VOICES.*

Nova trembled. Flint and Kaede were almost separated again.

“You never met a species like us: intelligent, but separate, right? We’re, like, a billion voices, and it’s driving you all mad, ain’t it? That’s what your kids going crazy on the surface is about: you can’t keep control of them?”

NO CONTROL. CONNECTION. WE ARE MANY, AND WE ARE ONE. TOGETHER.

Nova exhaled. “Just like us. We’re Kaede, and we’re Flint, and we’re Felicity and Nova too. Two, but one. One, but two. Fuckin’ weird, but it works for us. But you can’t stay here, right?”

TOO MANY VOICES. HURTS. TRY TO KEEP PEACE. TRY NOT TO HURT. WE ARE SORRY. THE VOICES MAKE US GO MAD. CANNOT STOP. MUST SILENCE, BUT DO NOT WANT TO! WE ARE SORRY!

It was genuine. They could feel it. This alien species who had arrived by some strange asteroid or meteor had no desire to hurt anyone, but the endless cacophony of minds, all of them individual, was too much for the poor creatures. Their network was breaking down, and it was making them go nuts. Lonely. Lost in the void. Just as they had once been.

Nova stepped forward, willing her way through to bear the psychic waves of pain and confusion from the alien network. Then she placed her naked hand on the creature’s flesh, uncaring about its squamous, slimy nature. Instead, she felt only connection.

“We’ll help you,” she communicated to it. *“We’ll help you find a way back.”*

It took a lot of convincing for the Hero Society to *not* view the alien spiders as monsters, but in the end the message got through. Flame Dancer was a good leader: practical and caring,

but still able to be a hard-ass and give orders when necessary. Nova was able to keep the poor aliens calm, keeping in psychic contact with them while the other heroes and ARTEMIS specialists helped extract them from their subterranean lair and bring them to a safe location away from a large populace. The plan was to get them back into space, slingshotting an artificial asteroid away from Earth on a safe trajectory with the aid of Meteor Woman and Lady Atlas. Nova would be the third partner, and simply couldn't wait to be part of such a monumental moment. But that would still be several weeks away.

In the meantime, there were other, more immediate changes in the new female hero's lifestyle. For one, she was now a fully accredited hero, a member of the Hero Society. Yes, it was just a starting rank, and there were still restrictions, but Flint was now living out a career far more impressive than he'd ever imagined, to the point where he couldn't imagine going back to 'merely' being a football legend. Kaede was happy too: she was now meeting new people every day, getting out of her comfort zone, leaning on Flint when she needed to go back to the passenger seat. The fact that the Hero Society had some of the greatest tech in the world was also a small bit of incentive, not to mention the chance to study their own body and further develop fusion technology.

Which, ironically, meant also shuttering their previous research into their own accident. Kaede still wasn't sure if she would have been able to reverse their change, but it was a question happily unanswered now. She and Flint were a matched pair and would remain so. Together, they were Felicity. Together, they were Nova. They were beautiful, they were stylish, they were athletic and healthy, and they had goddamn *superpowers*, as Flint often reminded her. The former male no longer even thought of himself as male anymore, and each day his internal voice came to match his external one, and the same was true of Kaede. One day, they suspected, their mental voices would be identical but for some unique cadences and grammar. That was okay; they'd never lose who they were; even in their perfect mind-melding, they were like yin and yang, circling and mingling and mixing, but always able to pull apart when they desired. It was their relationship, and it made for many lovely nights when they could simply 'date' one another. Some people thought it was strange that Felicity Yataka could often be seen giggling and murmuring over a drink at the bar, sitting alone and rejecting any visitor to her table. She didn't care: she had herself.

Well, she did care a *little*, which was why she wasn't *always* alone.

In fact, now that the young woman's life was back on track and her new identity organised, she continued to live on campus. She was a star track runner thanks to Flint's specialty, making friends with the other girls on the team, and she was often lecturing even professors on the nature of nuclear physics, courtesy of Kaede's intellect. Of course, their partnership meant that both were appreciating the other's interests these days. Flint could

even elaborate on basic physics, and was working his way up to advanced. Turns out, he was never the 'total dumbass' he'd thought he was.

In fact, Kaede had even let him take the lead answering questions in a lecture three weeks after they had talked with the alien spider queen. He did fairly well, getting only a few points wrong, which was fine by her: she was just proud of the one she loved deeply.

"You did seriously well. It was rather sexy."

"You think? I feel like I made a damn fool of myself, man."

"Not at all. You're learning, and that's the crucial thing."

"And sexy, you say? Well, that might be fun . . . tonight."

"I'm sure someone else will find us sexy too."

"Mhmm. I bet. We could change our clothing to that red thing. He loves the red thing."

"As you say, let's make it fucking happen."

Flint giggled. He entered their room, still in control of their body, and sauntered in. Together, they used their powers to manifest a very, very sexy red dress, one with a plunging neckline and very short hem. The bra became a push-up, and they were lifted up onto black heels that altered their posture, making them look very appealing to the eyes, especially since their hips swayed all the more.

"Honey!" they said together. "We're home!"

Dave popped his head out from the study, where he'd no doubt been working through some of his accounting work.

"Oh hey, Felicity, I was just . . . woah."

They grinned together, their minds melding in happiness from the way he looked at them. It was just like the first time; they *never* got sick of it.

"Woah indeed," Flint said. "Dude, ya'll are tenting already."

Dave blushed, looking down to see how his dick was already visibly hard in his pants.

"Well, I mean, can you really blame a guy, looking like the pair of you do? What do you say, Kaede?"

Kaede took over, stepping forward in a very sensual manner, an act both of them had worked to perfect. She placed her arms over Dave's shoulders, smiling sweetly at him. Their shared body was becoming very aroused. They'd been looking forward to this all day, especially after that damn battle in the early morning with the Society of Sin.

"I think that we're both of one mind now, sexy," she purred. "And we both want to fuck our man."

He felt her waist, gripping her hips before squeezing her ass.

"Mhmm, I can't believe I never saw how fucking sexy my best friend was."

"Well, I'm glad you did," Kaede replied. "That's Flint just saying how hot you are, and how much we both prefer being this way."

“You’re okay sharing me, still?”

“Please, we *both* get you. And you get both of us.”

Flint resurfaced. “It’s a two for one deal, y’all. You’d be a dumbass not to keep on taking in, man.”

Dave kissed her, and the pair of them formed Felicity, engaging in the pleasure of loving not just one another, but this man as well. It was a different kind of relationship, but it worked for all three of them. And besides, as they felt his hardness against them, they were reminded of just how blissful their union could be.

“Consider me not a dumbass, then,” Dave said.

“That’s the spirit. Why don’t you take this dress off of us in the bedroom and we make your dreams come true?”

They kissed Dave again, moaning into his mouth as he felt their sensitive breasts.

“Fuck yeah,” he said. “But . . . can you do something for me?”

“Anything,” Felicity replied, “so long as you get us there.”

He blushed. “Could you wear the costume? You know, as Nova?”

Felicity giggled, and then glowed. In just seconds, she was wearing her superheroine outfit, posing with her glowing braids and cocking her hip to one side.

“I think I can do that,” she replied.

And then the paired woman took him straight to the bedroom, borne aloft on fusion-powered jets. The three of them had a super time like no other.

The End