

THE VILLAIN'S COUCH

Written by

Justin K. Lynch

business@justinklynch.com

INT. MARCUS' OFFICE - DAY

A small TV in a small yet cozy therapist's office with a high view of the bustling city shows an unraveling news story. MARCUS MCVAUGHN (20s, cynical, focused) ushers an offscreen client out the door.

MARCUS

Alright, you get home safe, Penny!
We'll continue this riveting
discussion next week. Make sure you
drink lotsa water! A-And eat
breakfast!

He shuts the door. He collapses in his chair and tosses the clipboard he was holding onto the coffee table. The paper just reads the words: "DADDY ISSUES", in red ink. He lets out an exasperated sigh and looks at the TV.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

The hailstorms have ceased and all
of the fires in the downtown
district have finally been put out.
We still don't know the true
identity of this *Mother Nature* or
what this "Project Methane" is, and
Starlight and Captain Karma are
already working hard on bringing
the villain group known as *Calamity*
to justice. In other news, the
teleporting madman Sightseer's last
known whereabouts are-

Marcus turns the TV off.

MARCUS

Shit, give 'em to *me*. Least they
wouldn't complain so much.

PING. He checks his phone and sees he has an appointment coming up in five minutes. He groans loudly. Someone knocks on the door. He groans louder. He opens the door and finds no one.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Hello? Meh.

He shrugs and turns around and sees the villain SIGHTSEER (30s male, quippy) laid on the couch, bright yellow suit with cowl and all.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

W-Who the f- When did-

SIGHTSEER
I'm here for my five-o'-clock
appointment.

Marcus approaches cautiously.

MARCUS
Wait, wait, wait, aren't you-

SIGHTSEER
Right now, I'm Owen Baxter. Where's
my therapy?

MARCUS
You think I'm gonna give you
service? You're a criminal!

SIGHTSEER
Takes one to know one I guess.
"Sunview University" doesn't exist,
"Doc". But since I found that out
when I got here and I've got the
next hour of your attention, why
don't we make it count? Unless you
want this entire block to go on a
little sabbatical to the Sahara
Desert.

Marcus reaches for his phone as if he's trying not to wake a
sleeping bear.

MARCUS
Y-You know, it wouldn't take long
for the police to get here.

SIGHTSEER
Fine by me. They'll at least get to
haul off one crook to jail.
(whispers)
My money's on the guy who can't
teleport.
(normal)
Besides, don't you know about
HIPAA? Actually, you probably
don't.

Marcus relents and slowly sits in his chair across from
Sightseer. He picks up his clipboard.

MARCUS
'Kay then. What's on your mind?

INT. MARCUS' OFFICE - DAY - ONE HOUR LATER

After an hour, Marcus lowers his clipboard.

MARCUS

I mean, if I were you I'd think the same thing. The government controlled you your entire life just for your powers. But despite all that, Owen, I'm confident in saying all the families in that neighborhood you beamed into outer space last month probably don't give a shit about that. Sorry, probably *didn't*.

SIGHTSEER

What, you're saying *I'm* selfish? Not those pricks who stabbed me with needles for hours on end!?

MARCUS

Dude, you can teleport *anything* you can touch! All that power and you take it out on innocent low-class families and mom-and-pop shops? You've got crazy power and talent and you're wasting it on crime and getting your ass kicked by Starlight every week!

Sightseer looks down, pondering his words. He then looks back up.

SIGHTSEER

No one's ever told me that before. My last therapist just nodded his head and told me to leave after I vented for an hour. I... appreciate your honesty, Doc.

Sightseer teleports to the door.

SIGHTSEER (CONT'D)

Maybe it's time the public shares some of the spoils I take. Thank you, Doc. I'm telling all my friends about you. I've still got some time before Project Methane.

MARCUS

W-Wait, what do you mean by that?

Sightseer disappears. After a few seconds, Marcus looks to the TV and turns it on.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

This just in, the villain Sightseer has just been spotted... helping people? He's just giving away food and money! What caused this sudden change of heart!?

Marcus' phone PINGS. He has an appointment tomorrow at nine in the morning.

INT. MARCUS' OFFICE - DAY

MONTAGE - VILLAIN THERAPY

Differing villains of distinct costumes and abilities see Marcus in his office.

--BREAKNECK'S SESSION:

MARCUS

Look man, I get it. No one can stop you because you're too fast. Guess that's why you can't keep a girlfriend. Joking! Joking. Why don't you just use one percent of that power and crush track-and-field tournaments? It's your natural ability versus nine other guys with PEDs, sounds fair to me, and if they find out? Not like they can catch you.

--PARALYZER'S SESSION:

MARCUS (CONT'D)

So you're like Medusa, huh? Saw your Redgate Bridge incident where you froze the entire police force. Scary stuff. Love life must be hell, too. Tell me, have you tried dating a Blind guy?

--VEX'S SESSION:

MARCUS (CONT'D)

They do say "misery loves company". You don't deserve the burden of misfortune, and you want everyone to suffer like you. I get it, but that's still a dick move.

--THE INQUISITOR'S SESSION:

MARCUS (CONT'D)

You ask questions, huh? I got plenty for you, wanna hear them? *Why* are you doing all this? *What* does it accomplish? *Where* did you get that ridiculous costume? *Who* hurt you, and why do you feel the rest of the world has to answer for it? And *how* are you doing this, and can you please stop it?

--THAUMATURGE'S SESSION:

MARCUS (CONT'D)

You just want people to acknowledge you. Who doesn't? Maybe there's a way for you to use your conjuration powers to benefit both you and everyone else. "Abracadabra" some cash for the less fortunate. "Alakazam" some houses for the homeless. Want me to write some of these down?

END MONTAGE

INT. MARCUS' OFFICE - EVENING

The supervillain CALAMITY (40s male, cloning powers, temperamental) puts his white domino mask on and stands from the couch. The TV once again plays the news.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

Folks, it really is true! You are seeing heroes and villains fighting that behemoth together!

MILD CALAMITY

W-Well th-then. I g-guess I'll s-see my self out.

Marcus stands as well in alarm.

MARCUS

Wait, wait, just one more thing. I just wanna know how to find Mother Nature.

Calamity flinches at this and backs toward the door. Another Calamity with a black mask appears next to Marcus, who seems to expect this.

FIERCE CALAMITY

Ha, that's funny. You don't just find Mother Nature. She finds you, asshole.

MARCUS

Okay, that's fine, too. I guess.

FIERCE CALAMITY

Project Methane's in a week and you wanna still wanna die early? Heh, your call. Just don't drag me into it.

The Fierce Calamity walks to the door and leaves. Mild Calamity turns to Marcus.

MILD CALAMITY

Thanks for your help.

He leaves. Marcus looks to the TV.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

Mother Nature's "Project Methane" draws nearer as we speak. The cryptic message left at the Byron Building still perplexes experts and Supes alike. March 31st is coming folks, and there's only one person who knows what's coming with it.

He shuts it off.

INT. MARCUS' OFFICE - NIGHT

Marcus, visibly disheveled, starts to pack his things up after checking the date on the calendar, March 24th, and hears a knock at the door.

MARCUS

Sorry, I'm not seeing any clients right now!

The knocking persists.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Is this an emergency!?

Marcus opens the door and sees young woman SAMANTHA WIGGINS (early 30s, gentle).

SAMANTHA

Sorry for the late visit. This *is* an emergency, if you don't mind.

MARCUS

Oh, uh, yeah. Come on in.

Marcus steps aside and she sits on the couch as he sits in his chair.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

What's on your mind? And sorry, what's your name?

SAMANTHA

Samantha. I just need someone to talk to right now.

MARCUS

Okay, that's fine.

No one speaks for a few seconds before Samantha holds her head. Thunder RUMBLES outside.

SAMANTHA

Sorry, I'm just getting my thoughts in order. Can you start?

MARCUS

Uh, sure. You know, before the last few weeks, I really didn't think about the future much. But now, I'm counting every single day, unable to anything about it.

SAMANTHA

Some things are out of your control, and it drives you crazy.

MARCUS

Right? You just put the entire world on your shoulders, and unsurprisingly, when you fail, for some reason it just feels-

SAMANTHA

Like you're the bad guy.

The room grows quiet after this. Rain begins to pour.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

I just... I'm not in a very good place right now, and I feel like I'm going to end up doing something very harmful. And I won't be able to stop it.

Marcus tenses up at this.

MARCUS

I see. Um, I don't think... I'm equipped to handle this sort of thing.

SAMANTHA

What?

MARCUS

You see, I'm not who- I can write down the numbers of some other professionals nearby that'll listen to you, and who can actually help you. I just don't wanna be responsible for something I knew nothing about.

SAMANTHA

I just need someone to be here. And you are. So thank you.

Samantha closes her eyes and the storm stops. Marcus looks outside in confusion. Samantha gets up and walks to the door.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

I enjoyed this. Same time tomorrow?

Marcus nods his head as she leaves, oblivious to her identity.

END