

mahbu Comics

HERO BY NIGHT

NO 3 OF 4

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HERO BY NIGHT

#3

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THIS IS ALL MY FAULT.

I COULD HAVE BEEN MORE CAREFUL.

SHOULD HAVE TOLD ROSALIND THE TRUTH...



...THEY'RE GOING TO KILL HER, AND PROBABLY ME TOO IF I DON'T GIVE THEM THAT JOURNAL.

NEED TO FOCUS ON THE HERE AND NOW.

THE RING...



...IF I'D BEEN WEARING IT I COULD HAVE STOPPED THEM.



WAIT...

...THE PAIN IS GOING AWAY. THE RING MUST BE WORKING.

I FEEL STRONGER.



ULF!

PULL IT TOGETHER, JACK. GOT TO FIGURE OUT A WAY TO HELP ROZ. BUT HOW?

I NEED TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THESE IRON TALON GUYS, AND WHY THEY WANT THIS JOURNAL SO BADLY.

THE ANSWERS HAVE TO BE IN HERE SOMEWHERE.

I DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME TO PLAN. THEY SAID THEY'D CALL IN 24 HOURS WITH A RENDEZVOUS POINT.

HAVE TO LEARN AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE RIGHT NOW.

I REMEMBER READING ABOUT TALON BEFORE-- HERE...

...BUT IT LOOKS LIKE THE HERO HAD BEEN RESEARCHING A LOT ABOUT HIM PRIOR TO THAT. TRACKING HIM DOWN.

...PAGES AND PAGES...

I don't believe this fact to be true, but according to the Professor, Iron Talon claimed to be a 13th century alchemist named...

...René Talon.

After several years of study with famed alchemist, *Mirabilis*, Talon believed he had unlocked the secrets of the ancient science, which could grant a human potential immortality and unlimited wealth.

He rushed back to his home in Taillebourg to share the news with his colleagues.

He found only skepticism and ridicule when he arrived. His fellow scholars thought him mad.

Intrigued by his stories, the Governor gave him a test. If his tales were true, he would demonstrate the transmutation of metals... something no other alchemist had properly achieved.



True to his words, Talon easily demonstrated the transmutation process... from iron to gold.

LE JEU DE L'ENFANT.



Suddenly, everyone was listening. Alchemists and scholars from all over Europe were coming to learn his secrets.

He knew his knowledge was his power, and people would follow him in pursuit of it.

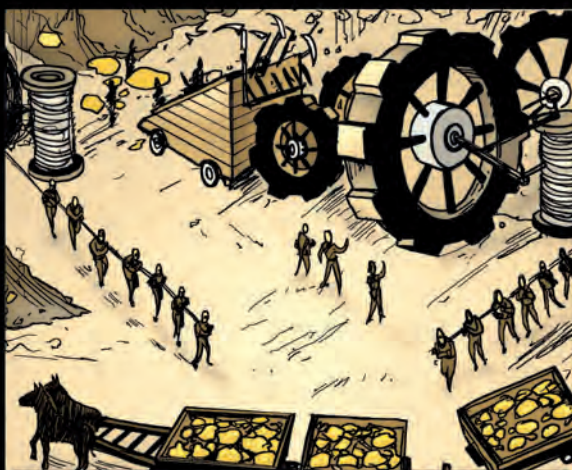
Soon, he formed his own society of only the greatest alchemists and scholars of the day. It would be known as **The Iron Talon**.



Most were turned away.



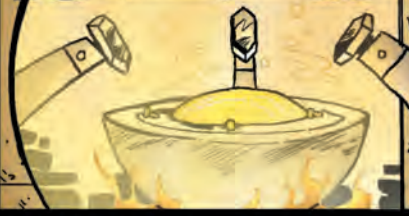
The group offered its combined skills to governments, trading them vast amounts of gold in return for the manpower and resources they would need for Talon's next project... **The Vitalogy Ring**.



It took an army of over 1000 men and five years to complete the forge, and mine the amount of raw materials that were needed.

The forging process was a success, and five Vitality Rings were produced. Rene' believed these rings could aid the human body, making the wearer feel younger, healthier, stronger.

In theory, the ring would act like a battery, powering the body at its core.



The key to potential immortality.

And indeed, they worked. When the Governor was presented with one, he felt better than he had ever felt in his life and wanted to hand deliver one to King Louis IX, himself.



But only seven days later the Governor was found dead.

The ring had poisoned his blood.



Instead of seeing this as a failure, Rene' viewed it as merely a side effect.

He went back to his laboratory to fix this problem.



He soon discovered he had made a minor miscalculation...

...certain combinations of the rings would effect the body differently...



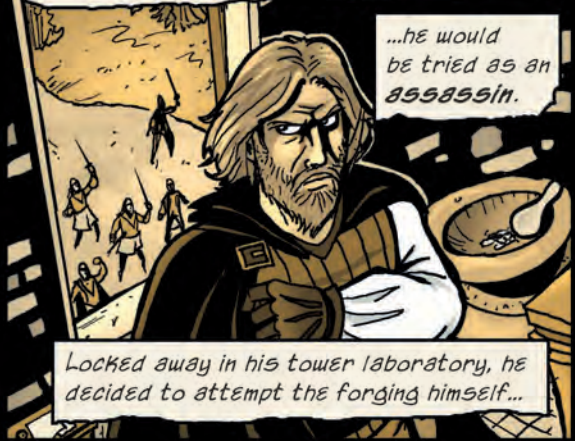
...all of the rings would need to be forged together in order to achieve the desired effects.

He would need a much larger forge and over 100 times the energy to safely transmute and forge the rings together...



...but Talon was now out of time.

Word had reached the King that it was Talon's ring that had caused the death of the Governor. He sent orders to have him immediately arrested...



...he would be tried as an assassin.

Locked away in his tower laboratory, he decided to attempt the forging himself...

...the operation was too much for his lab to contain...



...the heat, like the sun...

The energy...



...almost atomic.

All that remained of the entire French commune of Taillebourg were ashes, rubble and...



...what was left of a man...

JE L'AI FAIT...



JE L'AI FAIT!

The ring had fueled his body with energy, keeping him alive.

It had repaired him, but far from perfectly...

...the ring, still flawed.

He knew this process could be duplicated if given the right amount of time and resources needed...

...but, now finding himself in an age where alchemists were hunted and slain as witches and assassins, Talon knew he would have to do his work in secret...

...among the shadows.

For centuries, it is claimed, that the Iron Talon lived on, using his unlimited supply of wealth to manipulate world economies, helping to shape a world that would unknowingly do his bidding... for his cause.

In 1939, on the eve of a World War, the climate was right for his next operation.

Talon struck a deal with the Axis powers. They would provide everything he needed to forge the perfect power ring, and give him the country that had betrayed him to lord over-- All in exchange for power rings of their own for Hirohito and Hitler.

But to Talon, these dictators were fools. He knew they would turn on him as just as they had turned on their own people. There would be only **ONE RING** forged...

...and it would be **HIS**.

Unfortunately for Talon, much like the Axis powers, he didn't reckon on old Uncle Sam butting in to ruin their little tea party.

LET'S GIVE 'EM HELL, BOYS!

In December, 1944, I was part of the raid on the Iron Talon's bunker facility just outside of St. Vith, Belgium.

Centuries of Talon's hard work and planning had ended up in my hands as just a battlefield souvenir.

FOUND A GOLD DAGGER. WHAT YOU GOT THERE, LT. DAY?

JUST A SILVER RING.

PLATINUM, MAYBE.

BET YOU COULD SELL THAT.

It wasn't long after that I caught some shrapnel in my back and they sent me home. The doctors said I'd never walk again.

I knew then that I had to use it to help other people...

WOW.

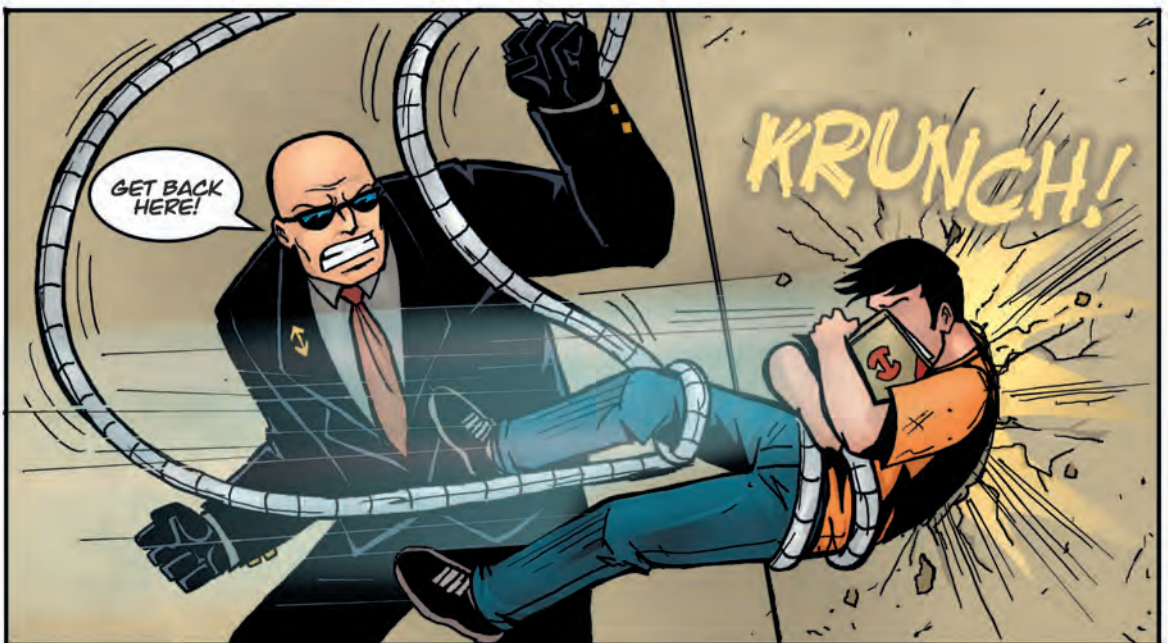
But, the ring gave me a second chance.

IT CURED HIM...

...THIS RING.

AHH! JUST WHAT I WAS LOOKING FOR...

YOU!















MEANWHILE,
SOMEWHERE IN THE
SOUTH PACIFIC...

MR. DAVID...

...IS THERE A
PROBLEM I'M NOT
AWARE OF?

NO, SIR.
EVERYTHING IS
GOING AS PLANNED.
WE'LL HAVE THE
JOURNAL LATER
TONIGHT...

THERE MUST BE
SOME SORT OF MISTAKE.
ALL OF MY MEN ARE
ACCOUNTED FOR HERE,
SIR.

EARLIER TODAY,
YOUR ANDROID
WENT OFFLINE AND
HASN'T LOGGED BACK
INTO MY TRACKING
SYSTEM...WHY?

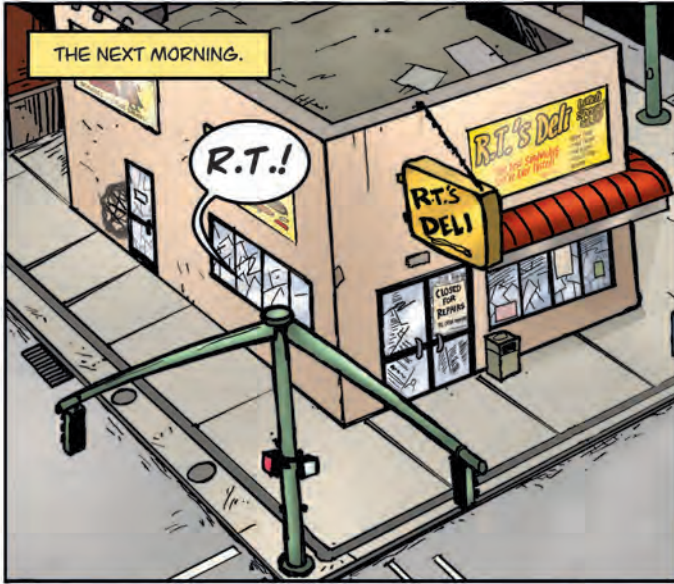
I DIDN'T HIRE
YOU TO MAKE
MISTAKES,
MR. DAVID. ARE
WE CLEAR?

YES. I'LL REPORT
BACK TO YOU WHEN
WE HAVE THE
JOURNAL, SIR.

HMMM...
THIS IS *NOT*
GOOD.

MR. SAMSON,
CAN YOU LOCATE
OUR MISSING
ANDROID,
PLEASE.

I'LL LOOK
INTO IT NOW,
BOSS.

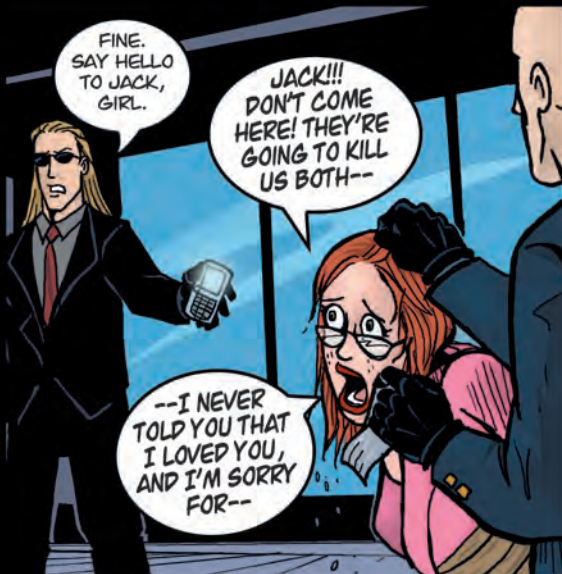














WHERE'S MY MASK?!



HOLD DOWN THE FORT, R.T. ...

...I HAVE TO HURRY!



SOMEONE NEEDS MY HELP!

GIVE EM HELL, HERO!

...TO BE CONCLUDED!