

Home-Made Heroes
Issue #2
Lord of the Manor

It was a part of town that should have been pulled down a long time ago. The houses and old apartment blocks had been abandoned since being condemned many years before but somehow they had all escaped the developers wrecking ball and stood as reminders to those that once lived there of a place and times long since lost.

Over time the gangs had come and gone leaving their marks and signatures both on the outsides and insides of the buildings. The windows were smashed and broken leaving open the interiors to the ravages of the elements. A segregated ghost town in a sprawling city where only a single voice could be heard.

“Maxwell!”

The rounded, balky figure of the sleeping bulldog twitched as it laid on it’s back with its legs in the air.

“Maxwell!”

Came the call again.

The slobbering bulldog opened its eyes and with a series of grunts and groans rolled itself upright, yawning and licking away the drool that had collected around it’s mouth as it slept.

“Maxwell, do you want a cup of tea or not?”

Called out the voice.

The hulking bulldog slowly waddled his way off in the direction of the calling voice. He walked through the disused rooms of the ram-shackled house and down the creaking, uneven staircase and into, what would have been in better days, the dining room. On the floor by an old table stood two silver dog bowls, one with water the other empty.

As Maxwell made his way into the room the second bowl was filled with hot, brown English tea poured from a China teacup.

Maxwell continued his slow waddle up to the bowl and once the tea had finished being poured he lapped up it up.

“Ahh Maxwell, there’s nothing like a good cup of lovely English tea”

Standing over Maxwell the dog was a tall thin gentleman, dressed in black top hat and tails complete with waistcoat, and a pocket watch and chain fitted across his waist.

His features were long and thin, his hair neatly slicked back, He was every bit the Edwardian gentleman.

He placed the china cup he had poured Maxwell's tea from onto the near by table and picked up a second cup from which he himself started to drink from.

“Hmm! Needs a touch more milk?”

He reached over to the table and picked up a silver milk jug.

“Shall I be mother?”

He stated looking down at Maxwell.

Meenwhile:

The horizontal lab table was cold and unfeeling, as were the metal restraining straps, which held Darkhalf down, on either side of him white-coated assistants with clipboards scurried around like ants between computers and other machines in the room.

Doctor King, Doctor Nicholson and Captain Cody watched the hussle and bussle of the lab from the next room through the two-way mirror.

“Is there nothing you can do for him?”

Questioned Cody about his brother.

“I'm sorry. But there's nothing more we can do for him”

Replied Dr King

“How much does he know?”

“Only that his turning human. Nobody's told him his dying, at this point in time we thought it wouldn't be a good idea”

Answered Dr Nicholson.

“Why not?”

“Well...you never know we still might be able to help him”

Dr King answered.

Cody moved closer to the glass his gaze, just fixed onto his brother in the next room.

“When it comes to telling him...if it comes to that I want to do it...I should do it.”

For the staff and customers inside The First National Bank, which lay at the heart of the down town financial district, the morning was just like any other morning, people queued to pay money in and take money out, to set up a loan or to start a mortgage, but one customer was about to ruin everybody's day.

The explosion ripped through the front of the bank like thunder, men, women and children, customers and staff were thrown to the floor under such force. Through the smoke and rubble strolled an 8-man gang all wearing everyday business suits and ties, but all masked and all armed.

Then, following them in, calmly and with care, brushing off the dirt and dust, which fell upon his clothes with a clean white handkerchief, walked the top hat and tails dressed gentleman this time carrying silver topped cane followed by his Bulldog, Maxwell.

“You four watch the normals, whilst the rest of you relieve this establishment of its monies”

He called to the men gesturing whose job was who's

“Ladies and Gentlemen, may I whole heartedly apologise for this most rudest of interruptions to your day.”

He stated to the people who were now face down on the floor not in pain, but in fear.

“Gentlemen please be as quickly as you can”

He called back to his men each of whom had already jumped into action. The four closest to the banks tellers had reached inside their suit jackets and pulled out holdalls and were making the bank staff fill them up, whilst the rest of the gang took up flanking positions around the rest of the bank in order to keep an eye on everybody.

Some way away Captain Cody stood waiting by the labs coffee machine. He didn't know how long he had been there, the cup was empty and he couldn't even remember when he had finished it had he been there that long staring into nothing, thinking.

Standing a few feet down the corridor Dr King watched Cody before walking up to him.

“I'm sorry Cody”

He says placing a hand onto Cody's shoulder.

“Just do the best you can...please Dr King?”

Replied Cody

“Don’t worry we will...but.”

“What is it Doc?”

“We got a Call.”

“Who is it?”

Questioned Cody.

“Lord Montague’s back...it’s a bank, down town”

Replied Dr King

Cody straightened himself up and tossed the coffee cup into the already over filled trash can.

“Right”

Dr King watched as Cody left, a faint smile forming in the corners of his mouth.

At the bank Lord Montague and Maxwell watched the gang in action.

“Hurry please gentlemen, before that knight in shining armour who protects the people of this fair city makes haste with his arrival.”

“And I most certainly wouldn’t want to disappoint you, your Lordship”

Lord Montague spins around to find Captain Cody standing behind him.

“Gentlemen if you please”

Replied the Lord pointing to Cody

With that Cody found himself being fired upon by the gang, the bullets doing very little harm to Cody’s body, but as the gangs firing takes place the people start to scream and panic some running for what cover they can find and during the panic Lord Montague grabs one of the bags of money from one of his men.

“And now sir I must take my leave of you”

And without even the hint of effort Lord Montague glides up into the air.

“Come Maxwell”

He called and the bulldog himself follows into the air flying up and crashing through the banks ceiling and out into the sky above.

But for Cody, as the rubble from Lord Montague's escape fell to the floor the firing still continued and the bullets still flew.

“Don't you sort of guys ever learn?”

Cody called out to the gang not knowing whether or not they can hear him over the noise of the gunfire.

And so, with speed that would have been but a blur to the normal eye, Cody catches the bullets fired at him in his hands and throws them back at the gang members with just as much speed, aiming to wound the gang and in turn making them drop their weapons.

Each gang member is hit and drops to the floor crying out in pain, Cody scans the bank making sure that nobody is too badly injured and then turns his attention to the sky above he too then glides with speed and grace up into the blue sky.

“I'll let the police handle you guys from here on in, I don't think you'll give them any trouble.”

By the time Cody was in the air Lord Montague and Maxwell where just small black figures in the distance but Cody didn't let this deter him from his pursuit and with super speed followed them both.

Up ahead Lord Montague looked behind himself and saw the pursuing Captain Cody.

“Looks like the game's afoot Maxwell, Boy Wonders on a charge”

Maxwell turned his head for a second, sees Cody gaining fast and then looked back at his master.

“ I think its time to go walkies don't you?”

Maxwell gives a throaty growling response back and suddenly turned, speeding off and away in another direction.

Cody speeding up behind them watches as Maxwell speed away but stayed on course and continued his pursuit of Lord Montague.

Closer and closer Cody got to Lord Montague. Flying faster and faster the force of speed pounding against his features, until suddenly he was able to grab the villain by one of his legs and within a second stopping himself and Lord Montague and swinging both of them

around. Cody, himself hovering in mid air whilst Montague rocketed backwards and smashed into an office block.

The well suited business men and women, on the streets below scattered in panic in answer to the sudden arrival of chaos into their every day lives, watching in horror and awe as Captain Cody dived onto Lord Montague but was kicked away and was sent spiralling down, crashing through another of the tall buildings walls as if he was nothing but a fly being swatted away.

Lord Montague rose up from the floor of the wrecked building and glided his way up into the sky, flying pass the fallen figure of Captain Cody, whose eyes where closed.

“Be seeing you”

Called Montague who continued on pass the building.

A second later Cody’s eyes flicked open and he pulled himself up onto his feet. He watched as Lord Montague glided away and then fired himself out of the building at speed, but didn’t not follow his pray, instead Cody flew around the building on the opposite side and meet Montague head on, crashing into to him. Montague was caught unprepared and again smashed against the concrete side of another building. He waved about back and forth, dazed for a moment and before he had time to regain his senses, Cody slide up behind him, locking him up in an arm and neck lock.

Montague twisted and turned trying to shake Cody off, but all that happened was that Cody tightened his grip.

“Give it up, Montague, you know you can’t win”

Called Cody

“The games not over yet”

Replied Montague through gritted teeth

“This isn’t a game”

Cody shouted at him

“Maybe not for you, but it’s all I have left!”

The lord answered, and unseen by Captain Cody, his enemy gave and inaudible whistle.

And as the two enemies hovered above the city in the bright blue sky. One trying desperately to brake free of a vice like grip, the other desperately trying to keep it, a small black dot appeared on the horizon line.

“Give in Montague there’s no sense in this violence”

Pleaded Cody

“I will not yield Sir”

He answered as the figure in the distance, grew ever so closer and was now noticeable as being that of a Dog.

“For you are the one that forgets his place”

Suddenly a look of realization appeared on Cody’s face and as he attempted to turn his head but at that moment Maxwell went flying into the back of him. Under the force of impact Captain Cody released his grip on Lord Montague and went tumbling down uncontrollably, hitting the ground at great speed, tearing up the concrete road as he was propelled across the ground before coming to a stop by smashing into a glass fronted store.

At first nothing but silence surrounded him as he lay there, slowly he began to hear the voices and cries of people around him, then the different sounds of sirens getting ever so much closer, he tried to get himself up and found his legs fall away from under him, but he tried again, this time, staggering to his feet. He looked up and out into the sky above, empty! No sign of those he fought, his gaze returned to ground level and silently he witnessed the damage caused by himself and those like him. He watched as people picked themselves and each other up out of the wreckage, as those that are not in shock run to administer aid to those who are not as fortunate as they were.

Slowly Cody went to help and in doing so caught a glimpse of himself in the broken glass.

Standing before him he saw a blooded and bruised man, his clothes tattered and torn, hardly the symbol of great power, and thinks to himself.

“Is this, what I see really worth it?”

Sometime later that morning anybody at ground level looking up into the sky would have seen the slow moving battered figure of Captain Cody making his way back to the place where his morning had started The First National Bank.

By the time Cody had returned to the Bank the scene looked very much different from when he had left in pursuit of Lord Montague. Now a large group of people had formed outside the bank held back by ticker tape barriers and a large contingent of police officers.

Newspaper reporters and television news crews huddled together, all trying to get the story first, whilst both police and ambulance vehicles blocked the street as their crews scurried around the scene of the crime. Cody silently and gracefully landed in the middle of the whole affair and people started to shout and cheer his name.

Cody looked around the chaos; injured people were being loaded into the ambulances some were being cared for on the roadside. Policemen escorted the handcuffed gang members into police vans; others were taking statements from witnesses.

“Lieutenant Graham”

Cody called out and a plain clothes officer, who perversely had his back to Cody whilst talking to a group of other officers turned and walked over to him.

The officer was tall, lean and in his forties with ragged features and a well lived in face with dark hair, all but it spotted in places with a little grey. He strode over to Cody with confidence, a man showing all the signs of being at ease with himself and his place in the world.

“Hello Cody”

His arm outstretched awaiting a handshake between friends and Cody returned the jester, both palms met and each gave a firm handshake, on releasing it's Cody who spoke first.

“Nice to see you had no trouble picking up the pieces Jim”

“Not much.... but”

Cody interrupted his friend pointing to one of the ambulances

“Hey what happened there?”

Jim Graham turned around to look in the direction of where Cody was pointing.

One of the gang members was being loaded into one of the ambulances, lying flat down unmoving.

“One of Lord Montague's gang died just before you showed up”

“How?”

Asked a shocked Cody

Jim Graham turned back to face Cody

“From what the witness say because of that little trick you pulled with the bullets”

“WHAT?”

“Now look buddy, normally I would have to put you under arrest, but because of your status with the government I’ve been told by my bosses who by no doubt have been told by their bosses and who by no doubt have been told by their bosses and so and so on. To release you on your own recognisance... but you’ve got to report downtown to me in the morning for the start of a full investigation.”

Cody bowed his head

“I don’t know how this could have happened Jim”

“It’ll be ok. Don’t worry about it, it was an accident, with your reputation, with who you are, no one will blame you. The only people you have to worry about is them”

Jim pointed over to the crowd of newspaper and television journalists.

“They don’t know and if need be they don’t need to know”

“Yes, but I’ll know, in all my life both before and after what I am now I’ve never kill anything...or anybody. Not even the vilest of criminals I’ve fought, I’ve always made sure that nobodies died because of or by my powers. As a sign that even with such great strength and with such great abilities, I could still be a man, be human and now...this”

“No one is going to be thinking anything less of you, James I know you, I know the type of man you are and so do the people of this city. It’s an accident nothing more and nothing less, you’ll be ok and anyway you’ve still got me in your corner to back you up buddy”

Jim Graham smiled at Cody who for a moment raised his head to look at his old friend and for a split second he smiled back before lowering his head again.

END OF ISSUE TWO

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