

The Sprintress #2 - "Shock to the System"

Written by Steven Bland

Nighttime in New York City.

"Robbery in progress at New York's Diamond District," the police band radio reported.

A police car arrived at New York's Diamond District where George Quesada fled the building with stolen diamonds. The cops got out of their car immediately.

"There he is! George Quesada! We've got 'im this time," one cop told another.

Soon, the cops got in the criminal's way.

"STOP IN THE NAME OF THE LAW," one of the cops shouted.

"Not tonight, flatfoot," Quesada said as he knocked the cops unconscious with his case of stolen diamonds.

The criminal ran to his getaway car as fast as he could.

Quesada got to his car and hopped in the driver's seat.

As the criminal started to step on the accelerator, a yellow blur whizzed by and the car was soon on bare rims.

Quesada couldn't believe his eyes and was shocked.

"What happened?" He asked. Soon, he saw the Sprintress reveal her presence to him.

"I happened," answered the Sprintress.

"THE SPRINTRESS," the criminal exclaimed.

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Quesada got out his gun and fired it at the superheroine, who easily dodged the bullet with her amazing speed.

"Naughty, naughty," the Sprintress said as she quickly seized the gun from the criminal's grasp. "You shouldn't play with guns."

"Good night," the superhero said as she punched out Quesada, knocking him unconscious. The Sprintress zoomed away, leaving the criminal for the police.

Later, at the Tombs Prison, a guard named Rafferty escorted George Quesada through the prison. Quesada was six feet and three inches tall and had a buzz cut.

"Well, *well!* After all these months, I've *finally* caught you, Quesada! You're wanted for murder in three states," the guard told Quesada as they arrived at a cell reserved for the latter.

"*You* didn't catch me, bozo! That new character, the Sprintress did," Quesada snarled.

"Remind me to send her a thank-you note," Rafferty said as he uncuffed Quesada and put him inside the cell. "Get used to this cell, Quesada. You'll be here for a very long time! Twenty years to be exact!"

After locking Quesada up, Rafferty walked away.

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The next day, at Professor Garrett's laboratory, Nellie North was helping Kay with an experiment.

"How are you doing?" Kay asked Nellie. "Are you having any problems?"

"Not at all," Nellie responded as she continued to work. "When I was still Kerry Addison, I dabbled in forensics before I became a detective."

Soon, Nellie finished mixing the chemicals.

"There, it's done," Nellie said.

"Let's test the chemical on this plant here," Kay said.

Once she joined Professor Garrett at her side, Nellie poured the experimental chemical on the plant. Then, the two ladies waited for the results.

"If we're right, this chemical *should* help provide a bigger, healthier, and more reliable sources of food," Professor Garrett answered.

Kay and Nellie watched as the plant soon yielded three times the vegetables. The two ladies smiled.

"We did it," Nellie said happily. "The experiment was a *success*."

Nellie had something on her mind.

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"Are you all right?" Professor Garrett asked.

"Yes," Nellie answered. "I was wondering. Where was my original body buried?"

"New York State Cemetery," Kay answered.

"Thanks," Nellie said. "I was thinking of visiting my grave."

Later, that afternoon, as a storm was raging, Nellie arrived at New York State Cemetery, carrying an umbrella, which she held over her head. She went to the grave where her original body, that of Kerry Addison, was buried. There, she saw Nathan West standing over it. Nathan was also holding a big umbrella over his head.

This is *weird*, Nellie thought. I feel like I'm a *ghost*.

"Kerry, I have never missed you *more* than I ever do *right now*," Nathan said to Kerry's grave.

"I just feel like my life has *no meaning* without *you* in it."

Oh, Nathan, honey, Nellie thought. I miss you, too. I really wish I could hold you in my arms and let you know that everything's okay, that, somehow, I'm *still alive*. But I *can't*. If I *did*, and you saw me in a *different body*, you'd think I was *crazy*.

Nellie walked up to Nathan. She glanced at the name on Kerry's tombstone before she looked at him.

"This Kerry Addison, she really meant a *lot* to you, didn't she, Mr. uh..," Nellie asked him.

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"West. Nathan West," Nathan responded. "And you are - - ?"

"North. Nellie North," Nellie answered. "Funny, isn't it? How our *last names* are directions?"

"Yeah. And, yeah, Kerry *did* mean a lot to me," Nathan said. "A couple months ago, she and I were engaged to be married. I was the *happiest man in the world.*"

I *know*, sweetheart, Nellie thought wistfully. Because, it was *me* you were engaged to. And I was the happiest *woman* in the world.

"I'm sure you'd like to be alone with her right now, so I'd better get going," Nellie said before she started to leave.

"Nellie, wait," Nathan called out. Nellie stopped in response.

"After this, would you like to go have coffee with me at Starbucks?" Nathan asked.

"Well, uh, *sure*," Nellie replied with a smile. "I'd like that."

"Great," Nathan said with a smile.

Soon, the two walked off together.

Meanwhile, at the Tombs Prison, the storm was getting worse.

Inside his cell, George Quesada paced as he stewed over being captured by the Sprintress.

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I was the best thief *ever*, he thought. I *never* got caught. That was, until the *Sprintress* came along. What I wouldn't give for the power to bust outta here and *beat* that super-fast witch!

Suddenly, a bolt of lightning from the storm knifed through the window of Quesada's cell and struck him.

"AAAGGGHHH," screamed the criminal. He fell face down.

Nearby, the guards heard the scream.

"That came from Quesada's cell," one of the guards said as he and the other guards headed there.

Once they arrived at Quesada's cell, the guards saw the criminal's body crackling and pulsating with electrical energy.

"Aw geez. Is he dead?" One guard asked.

"We'll know in a minute or two," another guard said as he knelt down. He turned the criminal over in order to examine him.

"Unnhh," Quesada moaned as he stirred.

"Quesada, are you okay?" The guard asked.

The criminal opened his eyes, which glowed and sparkled with electricity. He smiled an evil smile as he looked at the guard who was cradling him.

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"Never better," said the criminal. Then, he unleashed a powerful electrical discharge that overpowered the guard, knocking him unconscious.

The other guards got out their weapons and aimed them at Quesada.

"STAND DOWN, QUESADA," one of the guards warned. "STAND DOWN AND GO BACK TO YOUR CELL!"

"I DON'T THINK SO," Quesada said, as he discharged lightning blasts at the rest of the guards, incapacitating them.

Oh, maaan, he thought with an evil smile. I feel like my body is coursing with fantastic energy.

"I'M OUTTA THIS DUMP," exclaimed the criminal as he ran off. Soon, he was moving with electrically-enhanced speed until he was out of and away from the prison in minutes.

As he moved with superhuman speed, Quesada thought to himself.

At last, I'm as fast as the Sprintress herself. And I have the power to bring her to her knees. All I have to do is lure her to me.

Soon, Quesada arrived in Times Square.

Perfect, he thought. Now, all I have to do is cause a commotion.

The criminal threw around a few lightning blasts that destroyed everything in sight. Bystanders fled in terror.

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Once the Sprintress learns of the damage I'm causing, she'll come running here, *literally*, Quesada thought as he continued his rampage. And, *once* I get her *here*, I'm gonna *fry* her to a *crisp*!

Later, at a Starbucks in Manhattan, Nathan and Nellie sat at a table. Each had a cup of coffee in front of them.

"So, Nellie," Nathan asked. "What do you do?"

"I'm a lab assistant at Garrett Research," Nellie replied. "I just *started*. So, Nathan? What do you do?"

"I'm a digital reporter for the New York Sentinel.com website," Nathan replied.

"How did you and Kerry meet?" Nellie asked.

"I met Kerry when I was taking pictures of a suspected murder that she was investigating and we eventually got to talking," Nathan replied. "She was *very beautiful* and had a *fire* in those baby blue eyes of hers. In that moment, it seemed as if a *spark* had passed between us."

"Kerry was the *only* woman I ever *truly loved*," Nathan continued. "When *she* died, my heart died *with* her. She was my *reason for living*, and I honestly don't know if I can *go on* without her anymore."

"Nathan," Nellie told Nathan as she held his hand. "She would have wanted you to *move on*, to get *past the pain*, and to *continue* living your life."

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"You're *right*, Nellie. And, thanks," Nathan said. "You're a *great listener*."

"My pleasure," Nellie replied with a smile

Nathan and Nellie each sipped their coffees. Then, Nathan looked at Nellie.

"Uh, Nellie?" Nathan asked.

Nellie looked up in response. "Yes, Nathan?"

"You know, it's funny," Nathan said. "I've only just *met* you, but, yet, I feel like I *already know* you."

There was a pause and Nellie became slightly nervous.

Uh, oh. Does Nathan suspect that I'm in a *new body*? Nellie thought. I'd better come up with an answer *fast*.

"Uh, maybe in *another life*," Nellie told Nathan.

Nathan thought long and hard about it.

"Yeah, *that's* it. You're probably right," Nathan said.

Both Nathan and Nellie resumed sipping their coffees.

Suddenly, a news report aired on the overhead television set in the coffee shop.

"This is Jane Carter, WPIX News, reporting to you live from Times Square, where escaped murderer George Quesada, who had somehow gained superhuman powers, is now causing a rampage, threatening innocent people."

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George Quesada now has electrical powers? I'd better stop him before he hurts any more innocent people and wrecks the city, Nellie thought. But first, I need to give Nathan an excuse.

"Uh, Nathan, I'd better get going," Nellie said as she got up. "I just remembered. I promised a friend that I'd take care of her dog while she was out of town. I'll call you soon, okay?"

"But, I didn't give you my number," Nathan said.

"Okay, give it to me," Nellie said hurriedly. "But make it *quick*."

"Okay," Nathan said before he got out a ballpoint pen from his shirt pocket and quickly writing down his phone number on a napkin.

"Here you go," Nathan said as he handed the napkin to Nellie.

"Thanks, Nathan," Nellie said before she ran off. "You're a *really great guy*."

"You're welcome," Nathan quietly said.

Outside, Nellie went to a secluded spot where she changed into her costume. In seconds, she emerged from the spot as the Sprintress and was soon zooming through the city at superhuman speed.

If I'm going to fight Quesada, I'm going to need some *insulation*, Sprintress thought.

Soon, the super-fast heroine found a nearby hardware store and zoomed inside.

Once inside, she searched the store at superhuman speed until she found what she was looking for: rubber gloves. She grabbed them and put them on.

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Now, I'm ready for Quesada, the Sprintress thought as she zoomed out of the store.

In Times Square, Quesada continued to wreck the city with his lightning blasts. Suddenly, a living golden blur whizzed by and punched him, taking him by surprise and knocking him down. Before Quesada's eyes, the living golden blur revealed herself to be the Sprintress.

"Your rampage *ends now*, Quesada," Sprintress said emphatically.

"Yes, it does, Sprintress! Because it served its purpose in getting you to come to me," Quesada said as he projected an electrical shockwave from his right hand at the super-fast superheroine, knocking her down. Then, Quesada quickly picked himself up off the ground. However, the Sprintress soon recovered just as quickly.

"I've been *waiting* for this moment, lady! And it's *finally* here! This is the moment where I *kill you once and for all*," Quesada said as he moved with electrically-enhanced speed to attack the superheroine. Sprintress tried to avoid the superpowered criminal, but he intercepted and then, punched her. Recovering from the punch, the superheroine lunged at him at superhuman speed, ready to deliver a punch. However, Quesada instantly evaded it and then, hit her with a powerful punch that was enhanced by his electrical energy. The punch knocked Sprintress several feet.

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"Ooohh," Sprintress moaned. As the superheroine struggled to get back up, Quesada used a burst of electrically-enhanced speed to quickly move toward her.

"*Hold it, sweetheart. I ain't done with you, yet,*" Quesada said with a sneer as he pointed an electrically charged hand at her. Soon, he projected a rapid fire electrical beam at the Sprintress, who barely evaded the beam by using her superhuman speed to roll out of its way. The electrical beam, however, struck the ground near her and the explosion threw her into the outer wall of a nearby building. The Sprintress was seemingly dead.

"HA HAAA! *NOTHING AND NO ONE CAN STOP ME NOW!*" Quesada crowed triumphantly.

"You saw it here, folks," Jane Carter spoke into her microphone. "George Quesada has *soundly defeated* the new superheroine, the Sprintress." The news report of the superheroine's apparent demise reached every television set in New York City, especially the overhead television set in Professor Kay Garrett's laboratory. She was in shock.

"Oh, no," Kay muttered. "Poor Kerry."

"*WITH THE SPRINTRESS DEAD, THE ENTIRE CITY IS MINE FOR THE TAKING!*" Quesada crowed before he stimulated his nerves with electrical energy and ran off at superhuman speed.

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Jane Carter turned her attention to her news crew.

"We've got to go after him, *now*," Jane said. "What he's *about to do* could be *news!*"

"Be *real*, Jane," one of the camera operators told her. "*How* are we gonna *follow* and *catch up* to a guy who can, *literally*, move like lightning?"

"Good point," a chagrined Jane replied. "Let's get out of here."

Jane Carter and her news crew packed up their cameras and other equipment. They went to their van, got in, and drove off. Then, Sprintress recovered and, unseen by everyone, zoomed away from the scene.

In her laboratory, Kay, still grieving for the superheroine, felt an indoor gust of wind rushing past her. Then, the Sprintress soon stood before a startled Kay.

"Kerry? Is that *you*? I *thought* you were - - ?" A surprised Kay asked.

"As Mark Twain once said," Sprintress said with a smile. "The rumors of my death have been *greatly exaggerated*."

"Kerry," an overjoyed Kay cried as she went to hug the superheroine. "You're *alive!* I thought Quesada killed you with an electrical beam! I *saw* it on the news!"

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"I *barely* managed to avoid the beam," Sprintress told Kay. "The explosion from it hurled me toward a nearby building and rendered me unconscious, but, *luckily*, I was able to recover very quickly."

"I've got to go back out after him, but I'm going to need *better* protection. The rubber gloves didn't cut it," Sprintress added. "And I'll also need something to *contain* that high-voltage heel."

"I have *just* the thing," Kay said before leaving to go to the next room. She came back with a deep sea diving suit and a coil of resistance wire. She laid the coil of resistance wire on the lab table and handed the deep sea diving suit to the superheroine.

"A deep sea diving suit?" Sprintress asked.

"The suit is made of *Neoprene*, a synthetic rubber that is used in a *wide variety* of applications, which *includes* electrical insulation," Kay told the superheroine.

"In *that* case, I'll *take* it," Sprintress said as she quickly put on the diving suit.

Then, Kay picked up the coil of resistance wire off the lab table and handed it to the superheroine who took it.

"And, you can use this *resistance wire* to contain him," Kay added.

"Thanks, Kay," Sprintress said. "Quesada could be *anywhere* in the city by now. So, I'll just comb *every inch* of the city, inside *and* outside, at super-speed until I find him."

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"Good luck," Kay said.

The superheroine zoomed out of Kay's lab.

The Sprintress, now wearing the Neoprene diving suit, searched every area of the city, inside and outside, at superhuman speed for Quesada. Her search ended at, and inside, the New York Times Square police station, where she found the high-voltage villain in the main office, with police personnel whom he personally bound and gagged himself. Quesada had taken over the station.

"HEY, QUESADA," Sprintress announced, attracting Quesada's attention. "READY FOR ROUND TWO?"

"SPRINTRESS! I don't know *how* you *survived* our previous battle or *why* you're wearin' a *new costume*, but I *really don't care*," Quesada said. "I'M GONNA KILL YOU AGAIN! AND THIS TIME, I'LL MAKE SURE YOU'RE DEAD!"

Quesada fired a lightning blast at the Sprintress, but it had no effect on her, thanks to her Neoprene suit.

"HOW? HOW ARE YOU STILL STANDING?!" A raging Quesada asked.

"Oh, *this* new costume?" Sprintress asked. "It's made of *Neoprene*!"

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"You've *had* your shot. Now, it's *my turn*," the superheroine said, before she ran toward the high-voltage villain.

Sprintress punched him a few times in seconds. Soon, Quesada was down for the count.

Then, the superheroine used her superhuman speed to bind the electrical criminal with the coil of resistance wire as quickly as possible.

With Quesada incapacitated, Sprintress freed the captured police officers in seconds.

"Whew. Thanks, Sprintress," one of the cops said.

"My pleasure, boys," the superheroine said, before she presented them with Quesada bound with the resistance wire.

"Quesada shouldn't be any trouble now. I wrapped him up *nice and tight* in resistance wire," Sprintress continued. "Just make sure you have a *special* jail cell ready for him."

"You got it," another one of the cops said.

The Sprintress zoomed out of the building at superhuman speed.

Later, at Kay's laboratory, the Sprintress, back in her gold and red costume, but with her mask off, talked to the professor.

"Quesada shouldn't be any problem, now," Sprintress told Kay. "He'll be cooling his heels in a prison cell, soon. *Hopefully*, one that's *lined with rubber*."

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"So, all's well that ends well, right?" Kay asked.

"Yeah, I guess," Sprintress said, lost in thought.

"Are you all right?" Kay asked.

"Yes," Sprintress responded. "It's just that ... I saw Nathan standing over my grave at the New York State Cemetery this afternoon. We started talking, and then, he invited me to join him for coffee at the nearest Starbucks, where we continued to talk. Nathan told me that he felt like he *already knew* me. I think he *suspects* that I'm really Kerry Addison in this artificially created, genetically enhanced body. I'm going to tell him the truth."

"If that's your decision, Kerry, I won't question it," Kay said, before she got out her smartphone and handed it to the superheroine.

"You can borrow my smartphone," Kay said.

"Thank you," Sprintress said as she took it. Then, she got out her napkin with Nathan's phone number on it and dialed the number on the cell phone. She put the phone to her ear and waited for a response. Soon, she got one.

"Hello, Nathan," Sprintress said. "This is Nellie North. Could you meet me at Garrett Research, please?"

There was a brief pause.

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"You'll be here in a few minutes?" Sprintress asked. "Great. Bye." Then, she hung up

"Thank you," the superheroine told Kay as the former returned the smartphone to the latter.

Minutes later, Nathan arrived and saw Sprintress and Kay standing before him.

"Nellie?" Nathan asked. "*You're* the Sprintress?"

"Yes, honey," Sprintress said. "And I'm *really* Kerry Addison, in a new *artificially created, genetically enhanced* body."

"*Prove* it," a disbelieving Nathan demanded. "Tell me my birthday, my favorite color, my favorite pet, and my favorite music."

"Your birthday is March 12th, your favorite color is blue, you're a dog person, and your favorite music is jazz," Sprintress answered.

Nathan paused for a few minutes. Then, he smiled.

"You *are* Kerry," Nathan cried happily. "But, *how* are you in this body?"

"That would be *my doing*, young man," Kay answered.

"And, who are *you*?" Nathan asked.

"My name is Kay Garrett," Kay replied. "Kerry' body is something I artificially created, grew to adulthood in only a short space of time, and genetically engineered to be able to run and move at superhuman speed. However, I was unable to synthesize a brain. As you know, Kerry was killed by Dax Drago a few days ago, but, fortunately, her brain was miraculously intact. I was able to harvest that brain and place it into her current body."

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Kay turned to the Sprintress.

"Kerry? A demonstration of your new speed for Nathan, if you please?" Kay asked.

Sprintress nodded in agreement. Then, she ran around Nathan at superhuman speed for a few minutes.

"*Amazing*," an impressed Nathan said. "But, how are you unaffected by the friction generated by your super-speed?"

"When I created Kerry's new and current body, I made it superhumanly durable enough to withstand the friction generated by her superhuman speed. Also, her costume is made of Kevlar."

"I'm entrusting you with my secret, sweetheart," Sprintress told Nathan. "You must tell *no one*."

"I *won't*," Nathan said. "Your secret is *safe* with me, Kerry, I mean, Nellie."

"When it's *just us*, you can call me Kerry," Sprintress told Nathan. "In *public*, you must call me Nellie. When I'm *in costume*, call me Sprintress."

"Got it," Nathan said.

There was a pause.

Soon, Sprintress and Nathan hugged each other, and then, kissed passionately. After the embrace, Nathan left as Sprintress watched.

"Goodbye, Kerry," Nathan said.

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"Goodbye, Nathan," Sprintress said.

Kay looked at Sprintress.

"He's a *really special* man, isn't he?" Kay asked.

"He *sure is*," a smiling Sprintress replied.

Take care, Nathan, Sprintress thought as she stared off. I will *always* love you.

- THE END

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