

The Sprintress #3 - "Aperture"

Written by Steven Bland

Two years ago, a young hooligan named Frankie Johns barged into a convenience store carrying and waving a handgun around, frightening an old man and his wife, who were the store's owners. Frankie had light brown hair and blue eyes and was wearing a red hoodie, baggy blue jeans and sneakers.

"GIVE ME *ALL OF YOUR MONEY*," Frankie demanded loudly as he aimed his gun at the scared couple. "*NOW!!*"

The old man and his wife fearfully complied and frantically opened the till of their cash register.

"*C'MON, C'MON*," an impatient Frankie said. "*HUSTLE IT UP!!*"

The old man and his wife scrambled to get all of the cash they could out of the register's till as fast as they could.

"What's your *hurry*, Frankie?" A female voice asked from behind Frankie. Frankie turned around and saw police detective Kerry Addison, who was behind him and had a gun trained on him.

"You'll have *plenty of time* where you're going," Kerry said. "*Behind bars, to be exact! You're under arrest!*"

"*YOU'RE NOT TAKIN' ME, LADY*," Frankie exclaimed as he grabbed a nearby can of vegetables and threw it at Kerry. As Kerry ducked to avoid the projectile, Frankie took advantage of the detective's distraction and ran out of the store. Once she picked herself up off the floor, Kerry turned her attention to the couple.

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"Are you two okay?" Kerry asked them.

"Y-yes," the visibly shaken old man said. His wife, who was also visibly shaken, nodded.

"Good," Kerry said before she immediately ran out of the store to pursue Frankie.

Once she was outside, Kerry looked in all directions.

Now, *where* is that hooligan? Kerry wondered.

Soon, she saw Frankie, who was a few feet away from her and was still running.

Aha, there he is, Kerry thought.

Then, she ran after him.

"*SURRENDER NOW, FRANKIE! MAKE IT EASIER ON YOURSELF,*" Kerry called out to Frankie as she chased him.

Oh *crap*, it's that lady cop! I gotta ditch her fast, Frankie thought as he frantically looked around for a hiding place while he ran through the city streets. Soon, he saw a nearby storm drain to his right.

Hah, maybe I can lose her in the sewer, Frankie thought as he entered the storm drain's narrow opening and slid through it. However, he was noticed by Kerry, who was a few feet away and behind him.

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Ugh, a *storm drain*? You have *got* to be *friggin' kidding* me, Kerry thought as she saw the storm drain Frankie went into.

Well, if I want to catch this kid, I'll *have* to use it, Kerry thought as she headed for the storm drain and entered through its narrow opening.

Geez, I must be putting on weight, Kerry thought as she tried to slide through the storm drain. Soon as this case is over, I'm going on a diet. However, she soon managed to make it through the storm drain and landed in the sewers.

Made it! Okay, Frankie, *where* did you run off to *now*? An out of breath Kerry thought as she quickly looked for Frankie. Soon, she found her quarry, who was still running.

Aha, Kerry thought as she resumed her pursuit of him. Soon, she was catching up to him.

You're not going to lose me again, buddy, Kerry thought. I'll *make sure* of it!

She's *gaining* on me, Frankie thought as he looked behind him at Kerry while he ran. However, because he was so busy looking over his shoulder, Frankie didn't see a nearby brick wall in front of him, until it was too late. He ran into the wall and fell to the ground.

"Ooofff," Kevin said.

Ha! I've *got* him now, Kerry thought as she ran toward Frankie. Once she approached the young hooligan, she drew her gun and aimed it at him.

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"*End of the line, Frankie Johns! You're under arrest,*" Kerry said. "You have the *right* to remain *silent!*"

"*NO! I CAN'T GET CAUGHT,*" Frankie exclaimed. "*NOT NOW!*"

"*Of course you can! Especially now,*" Kerry told Frankie. "And you just *did!*"

Suddenly, a circular dimensional portal, bluish in color, opened up near Frankie right before his and Kerry's startled eyes.

"*What in the world?*" Kerry asked.

"*ALLL RIIIGHT,*" Frankie exclaimed with glee at the sight of the portal. "I'M *OUTTA* HERE!"

"*HASTA LA VISTA, BABY,*" the young hooligan crowed to Kerry as he immediately jumped into the portal.

"*GET BACK HERE,*" Kerry demanded as she attempted to follow Frankie into the portal, but he immediately closed it behind him with only a thought before she could jump into it.

Blast it, Kerry thought. I *almost* had him!

Kerry got out her radio and put it to her ear.

"This is Detective Addison," Kerry said. "I *had* the perp, but he managed to *give me the slip.*"

Soon, Kerry put up her radio and walked to a nearby ladder that lead to a manhole.

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No sense explaining to them what I saw, Kerry thought as she climbed up the ladder. They won't believe me. Heck, even *I* don't believe it. And, *yet*, I saw it with my *own eyes*. A *circular dimensional portal* opened up near Frankie and he disappeared into it.

Soon, as she approached the manhole cover, she moved it away. Then, she looked around to see if any cars were coming and going. There were no cars at the moment.

Good. The coast is clear, Kerry thought. It's safe to come out now. She climbed out and was soon topside.

With his new ability, Frankie could be *anywhere* he wants to be in an *instant*, Kerry thought.

Meanwhile, the dimensional portal opened up in a local junkyard and Frankie emerged from it.

As soon as he was out of the portal, it immediately closed up.

Man, that was *close*, Frankie thought. That cop chick would've *had* me for sure!

Then, Frankie soon looked around.

Oh, maannn, Frankie thought with a smile. This is *unreal!* I got from the sewer to *here* in an *instant!* It was the *portal* that brought me here! It *had* to be! It *opened up* near me when I *wanted* to escape that cop chick! Once I jumped *into* it, it took me *here!* *Somehow*, I *made* that portal happen!

The question is, can I *do it again?*

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Soon, Frankie gestured with his right hand and concentrated. Another bluish colored circular portal opened up near him.

Ha ha! It *works!* I *did* it, Frankie thought. I have the power to open dimensional portals.

Then, Frankie willed the portal to close. It did.

And *close them* as well, Frankie thought. I wonder how *many more* portals I can open up?

Soon, he opened up many circular dimensional portals with only a thought. Frankie couldn't believe his eyes.

"Wow! This is *amazing!*" Frankie cried happily. Then, he jumped into one of the portals.

"I can be *here,*" Frankie crowed as he popped up out of another portal. Then, he popped back into the portal.

"Or *here,* in the *blink of an eye,*" Frankie crowed as he popped up out of yet another portal.

Then, he jumped out of the portal and closed all of them with only a thought.

"With my new powers, *everything* in this city, money, gold, and jewels, could be *mine* for the *taking,*" Frankie crowed.

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Tonight in the present, at eight o'clock, inside Kay Garrett's laboratory, Kay was monitoring weather patterns in the atmosphere with her newest invention, a Doppler wave tracking system, which was designed to detect elemental disturbances in the atmosphere and trace them to their source. The system picked up an elemental disturbance and Kay traced it to its source: the Bank of Athens Trust Company.

"Hmm, *that's* odd," Kay muttered. "*Why* would an elemental disturbance come from a *bank*?"

A few minutes later, the Doppler wave tracking system detected another elemental disturbance and Kay traced it to its source: the First American National Bank.

I'd better call Kerry, Kay thought as she took out her cell phone and dialed Kerry's number. She waited for a response. Then, she got an answer.

"Hello?" Kerry answered.

"Kerry? This is Kay," Kay said over the phone. "Come to my lab - - *in costume*. I have something interesting to show you."

"Be right there," Kerry answered.

In seconds, the Sprintress arrived.

"What's up?" Sprintress asked.

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"I was monitoring weather patterns with my newest invention, the Doppler wave energy tracking system, when it started picking up two elemental disturbances, one from the Bank of Athens Trust Company and the other from the First American National Bank," Kay told Sprintress. "Frankly, I'm *baffled* as to why those disturbances came from those two banks."

"It might have something to do with Frankie Johns," Sprintress replied.

"Who's he?" Kay asked.

"He was a young hooligan who fell in with the wrong crowds at an early age and has been sent to Juvie many times," Sprintress answered. "One night, two years ago, when I was still Kerry Addison, I caught him trying to rob a convenience store. He resisted arrest and ran from me, but I managed to keep up with him. When I finally had him cornered, a bluish-colored dimensional portal suddenly opened up in front of him and he went inside it. Before I could enter the blasted portal to pursue him, it closed up. After that day, he laid low. Until *now*. He's *sure* to strike next, but *where*?"

"We'll have to wait for the system to pick up another disturbance," Kay said.

"But, in the meantime, take this and put it in your ear," Kay said as she gave Sprintress an earpiece communicator. "It will allow me to communicate with you."

"Okay," Sprintress said as she put the earpiece communicator in her ear. "And thanks."

Then, Kay's Doppler wave energy tracking system picked up another elemental disturbance and Kay quickly traced its source.

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"It's coming from the - -, " Kay said.

"Broadway National Bank," Sprintress said, finishing Kay's sentence before the former zoomed out of the latter's laboratory.

Soon, the Sprintress was racing through the city streets.

I'm glad Kay invented that Doppler wave energy tracking system. It just helped me find Frankie Johns, Sprintress thought. I've got to *hurry*. He won't be there for long. *Speed* is of the *essence*.

In minutes, the superheroine arrived at her destination, the Broadway National Bank.

Once inside, she headed for the vault door and tried every possible combination at superhuman speed. In only a few seconds, the vault door was soon opened. She saw a costumed individual, whose costume was a black bodysuit and cowl with blue gloves, boots, and a rift insignia on his chest, opening up a dimensional portal underneath a big pile of money. In the blink of an eye, the pile of money disappeared through the portal and was gone.

"Banking hours are *over*," the Sprintress said, announcing her presence. She soon had the costumed individual's attention.

"THE SPRINTRESS," the costumed individual exclaimed.

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I have to be *careful*, Sprintress thought. If I let on that I know his *real name*, I could compromise my secret identity.

"And, who are *you* supposed to be?" Sprintress asked.

"I'm *APERTURE*," the costumed individual replied. "MASTER OF DIMENSIONAL PORTALS!"

"Give it up, Aperture! I'm taking you in," Sprintress said as she charged toward him at superhuman speed to grab him.

"Not a chance, Sprintress! I can use my portals to transport *not just* myself - -," Aperture said as he quickly opened up a dimensional portal between himself and the superheroine.

He opened a dimensional portal in front of me so suddenly, Sprintress thought as she continued running. Can't stop my forward momentum. I'm plunging right *into* the portal. Soon, she was through the portal. Then, a second portal opened up too close to a nearby wall. Sprintress emerged from the second portal and collided very hard with the wall.

"ARGH," Sprintress exclaimed.

"- - BUT *OTHER PEOPLE* AS WELL," Aperture bragged. "As you've just found out."

"Oooh," Sprintress moaned as she recovered from the collision.

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It was like I *didn't exist* until I hit that wall, the superheroine thought as she was recovering from the collision. Aperture opened up another dimensional portal.

"Hey, Sprintress! Catch me if you can," Aperture said, taunting Sprintress. Then, he jumped through the portal. Once he was through the portal, it closed up behind him. As it did, the superheroine had finished recovering.

"Kay, where's the *next* elemental disturbance going to be?" Sprintress said softly into her earpiece communicator.

"It's at the old Parker shipping warehouse at the East River," Kay said over the earpiece communicator.

"Thanks," Sprintress said. I haven't a *moment* to lose. Aperture may not have super-speed like I do, but thanks to those dimensional portals of his, he can travel to anywhere at *warp speed*, and that's *way beyond* my limit!

Soon, the superheroine zoomed out of the bank.

In minutes, the Sprintress arrived at her destination.

The old Parker shipping warehouse has been deserted for years. His choice of this place is very clever. He could easily hold off an army in that moldy, rotting dump, Sprintress thought as she went inside.

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Have to stay on my toes, Sprintress thought. *Anything* can happen.

Unbeknownst to the superheroine, a dimensional portal opened up above her and a bunch of crates rained down from the rift on top of her.

"UNNHH," Sprintress exclaimed as she was buried by the sudden debris.

"HA HA HA HA HAAA," Aperture laughed as he hid in a heavily shadowed area a few feet away from the superheroine.

"Hey, Sprintress! Catch me if you can," he taunted

"I *will* catch you, Aperture," Sprintress vowed. "And *when* I do!"

"Not *when*, sweetheart," Aperture said mockingly. "*If!*" Then, the villain took off.

He's right, *blast* it, Sprintress thought as she turned her attention to the crates that were on top of her. If I'm *lucky* enough to catch him, how do I *contain* him?"

Think *positive*, Kerry, you *will* catch him, Sprintress thought to herself. But *first*, you need to *free yourself* from this debris!

The superheroine then used her superhuman speed to punch through the crates like a jackhammer. In seconds, she was free.

"I'll find you sooner or later, Aperture," Sprintress vowed as she hunted for her quarry.

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"Then, let me make it *easy* for you," Aperture said as he stepped out of the heavily shadowed area.

"Thanks, I'll make this as *painless* for you as possible," Sprintress said as she ran toward Aperture at superhuman speed. As the superheroine was halfway toward Aperture, a circular dimensional portal opened up under his feet at his mental command and he disappeared through it. The portal disappeared. Then, a second portal opened above the spot where Aperture once stood. At the same time, Sprintress was nearing that spot. Once the superheroine reached the spot where Aperture once stood, the latter fell through the portal above and landed on top of Sprintress.

"OOOFFF," Sprintress exclaimed as she fell down. Aperture got off of Sprintress and stood up over her.

"Hah," Aperture scoffed. "You're no match for me!"

"We'll *see* about that," Sprintress said as she got back up.

"Frankly, Sprintress, I *seriously doubt* it," Aperture said as he surrounded Sprintress and himself with multiple dimensional portals. From them, Aperture was able to land blow after blow on the superheroine.

He's attacking me from *all directions* at *once*, Sprintress thought as she endured the beating. Since I don't know where the next punch will come from, I'll have to be alert.

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Moving quickly, Sprintress managed to evade a punch from Aperture coming from one of the portals and to grab Aperture's arm, but the latter pulled her through the portal and threw her to the floor.

"OOOFFF," Sprintress exclaimed as Aperture created more circular dimensional portals.

Wait a minute, Sprintress thought. Those portals are a *two-way street*. All I have to do is punch through *every* portal at super-speed until I find the one that leads to Aperture. The superheroine did exactly that and, soon, she found the portal that lead to her quarry. Her punch knocked the criminal unconscious. As a result, the multiple dimensional portals faded. Soon, she stood over the unconscious villain.

Well, *that's* the end of *that!* Aperture's down for the count! Now, to see if Kay can find a way to inhibit his powers, Sprintress thought as she grabbed Aperture and then, zoomed out of the warehouse with him.

Soon, Sprintress, carrying Aperture, arrived back at Kay Garrett's laboratory where Kay was present to greet her.

"I'm back," the superheroine announced. "And I'd like you to meet Aperture - -"

"- - better known as Frankie Johns," Sprintress said as she unmasked Aperture. "Can you whip up a device that can inhibit his powers?"

"I'll need to *study* him, first," Kay replied. "Place him on the lab table."

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The superheroine did what Kay requested. With Frankie on the lab table, Sprintress quickly strapped him to it. Then, Kay analyzed him and found the section of the brain that gave Frankie his powers.

"Give me a few minutes," Kay said before going into another room and closing the door behind her.

"Sure," said the artificially created, genetically-enhanced woman. "And I'll watch Frankie."

As minutes passed by, Sprintress continued to watch Frankie. Soon, the door opened and Kay emerged from it with a cybernetic chip, which she showed to the superheroine.

"This should neutralize him," Kay said.

"What is it?" Sprintress asked.

"It's a microchip that, when implanted into his brain, *can* - - and *should* - - inhibit the section that gives him his dimension warping powers," Kay answered. "And I must implant it *into his brain*."

Sprintress watched as Kay implanted the inhibitor chip into Frankie's brain. In only a few seconds, she was finished.

"There. It's done," Kay said.

"That was quick," Sprintress replied.

Then, the superheroine removed the earpiece communicator from her ear.

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"Thanks again for the earpiece communicator, Kay," Sprintress said as she gave it back to Kay.

"It was a big help."

Suddenly, Aperture regained consciousness.

"Wha? Where *am* I?" He asked. "*What's* going on?"

He looked around and saw the Sprintress.

"You're going to Juvie, Aperture. *That's* what's going on," the superheroine told him.

"THE *HECK* I AM," Aperture exclaimed defiantly. He tried to open a dimensional portal, but he was unable to.

"I-I *CAN'T* OPEN A PORTAL," a panicking Aperture exclaimed.

Kay's inhibitor chip *is working*, a smiling Sprintress thought. "Gee, what a shame!"

Soon, the Sprintress picked up Frankie and zoomed off with her unwilling passenger. Kay watched as she left.

Minutes later, at the Horizon Juvenile Center in Bronx, New York, two officers were surprised by a gust of wind whooshing by them.

"What the - -?" the first officer asked. The gust of wind was revealed as the Sprintress carrying Aperture.

"THE SPRINTRESS," the officers called out in unison.

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"Special delivery, gents. One teenaged, super-powered bank robber with his powers neutralized," Sprintress said as she handed Frankie over to the two officers.

"Thanks, lady," one of the officers said, before he and his partner immediately took the costumed villain into custody.

"All right, pal. Let's go," one of the officers told Aperture as they led him away.

As he was being led away, Aperture looked back angrily at the superheroine.

"I'LL GET EVEN WITH YOU, SPRINTRESS," Aperture vowed. "I SWEAR IT!!"

"I doubt it, Aperture," Sprintress said. "But, I'm looking forward to see you try."

Soon, the officers and Frankie were gone.

Well, that's *that*, the superheroine thought, before she zoomed off.

Now all that's left is for me to head for home and get some rest, Sprintress thought.

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