

The Sprintress #9 - "Beehive"

Written by Steven Bland

A high society party is held on a beautiful Wednesday night. Among the attendees is wealthy socialite Veronica Van de Camp, who had dark red hair. Suddenly, a costumed super-villain with a huge glue gun hooked up to a glue tank on his back broke in.

"ALRIGHT, I KNOW THIS IS A LAME PUN, BUT THIS IS A STICK-UP," the supervillain exclaimed as he fired his glue gun at the patrons' feet, sticking them to the floor.

"The name's Epoxy, and I demand that you hand over all your money, jewels, and other valuables," the super-villain said.

Suddenly, the Sprintress arrived on the scene.

"How about if I hand you over to the authorities, 'Epoxy'?" The super-fast superheroine asked before disarming and subduing the villain in seconds, as an impressed Veronica watched.

Veronica was especially fascinated as she watched the Sprintress free the patrons by using her superhuman speed to create friction to melt the glue around their feet.

Police arrived on the scene.

"This costumed perp is all yours, gents," said the super-fast superheroine.

An awed Veronica watched the Sprintress zoom out of the building.

Later, at a prison, Epoxy, whose real name was Elmer Jameson, was sitting in his cell, was approached by a guard who reluctantly unlocked his cell.

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"I can't believe I'm actually doing this, but I'm letting you go," the guard said. "Someone actually posted your bail."

Jameson smugly left his cell.

Once he emerged from the prison building's doors, Jameson saw a limousine arriving at and pulling up to the building.

Once the limousine was parked, a door opened for Jameson and he got in. Once he was in the car, Jameson closed the door and the car drove off. Inside the car was a right-hand man for a crime boss and a female hired gun.

"Thanks for posting my bail, Mr. DiMaggio," Jameson said.

"Stuff it," Jameson," DiMaggio told him. "Mr. DeMeo ain't happy that you botched that job at the high society ball earlier tonight."

"It wasn't *my* fault, Mr. DiMaggio," Jameson replied. "It was the *Sprintress!* She stopped me from getting my decent score!"

"Okay, Jameson. I'll give you another chance," DiMaggio told Jameson. "Only *this* time, you're gonna have a *partner.*"

"And *who* would that be?" Jameson asked.

"That would be me," the female passenger said, attracting Jameson's attention. "My name is Felicia Duke, but you can call me Lubricator."

"And if the Sprintress tries to get in our way," she added. "I will give her the slip. *Literally!*"

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"So, what's the next job gonna be?" Jameson asked.

"We haven't planned it yet," DiMaggio answered.

"But it's gonna be *big*," he continued with a sly smile.

The next morning, at Garrett Labs, Nellie North briefly looked at the front page of the newspaper she had brought with her before she got to work stocking some supplies.

I can't believe Epoxy made bail, she thought while doing her job. I'll have to patrol the city tonight and search for that criminal again.

Kay Garrett entered with Veronica.

"Nellie, I'd like you to meet Veronica Van de Camp," Kay said as she introduced Veronica to Nellie. "She's one of our newest researchers."

"Veronica Van de Camp?" Nellie asked smiling as she shook Veronica's hand. "You're also one of the city's wealthiest socialites, aren't you?"

"I am," a smiling Veronica answered. "It's a pleasure to meet you, Nellie. I hope we'll be able to work together sometime."

"Well, I've got to get back to work," Veronica said. "I'm working on a very important experiment."

"Okay," Nellie said. "Good luck with it. Nice meeting you."

"Likewise," Veronica said as she and Nellie parted company. Kay left as well.

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Later, Veronica approached her laboratory. Upon entering, she closed the door behind her. Then, she walked over to a table. On it, was a newspaper which she had brought with her.

Picking up the paper, Veronica looked at the front page which had an article that caught her eye.

That guy with the glue gun that Sprintress captured got released on bail, eh? She thought. Let's see what I can do to get ready for him.

Veronica began working on a special serum.

If I'm right, this serum I concocted using DNA from bees should give me their powers, she thought. Powers that I can use to begin an exciting career as a superheroine, like the Sprintress.

I've followed her career since her first appearance, she thought. What an incredible and thrilling life she leads.

I couldn't find a way to duplicate her superhuman speed, she thought. So, I did the next best thing, I researched bees and became fascinated by what they can do.

Soon, the serum was finished.

There. Let's see if this works, she thought as she pressed the vial of serum to her lips and drank it.

Ooh, I feel woozy, Veronica thought. Leaning on the lab table for support, she accidentally knocked over a microscope.

Oh no, she thought. I've got to catch it.

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Veronica attempted to catch the microscope before it hit the floor and, much to her surprise, accomplished the task easily.

Incredible, a relieved Veronica thought. I actually managed to catch the microscope before it hit the floor.

After Veronica put the microscope back on the table and briefly stepped away, the backs of her hands began to itch

Maybe I have something in my storage locker, Veronica thought as she walked toward it.

As she opened the door, she ripped it off its hinges, much to her shock.

Oh, wow, Veronica thought. I've got to put this door back.

She tried to let go of the torn locker door, but it stuck to her hands.

I can't get it off, a panicking Veronica thought.

Okay, Veronica keep cool, she thought to herself. Just relax.

Suddenly, the torn storage locker door was no longer stuck to her hands.

Whew, she thought. That's a relief.

Suddenly, the backs of her hands began to itch again, and, this time, short bee-like stingers came out of them.

So *that's* what that itching sensation was, Veronica thought. I've got *stingers*.

But, now I've got to try and retract them, she thought.

Veronica concentrated and the stingers did indeed retract into the backs of her hands.

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Soon, Veronica found herself shrinking and replicating until she and all of her clones were approximately one-half inch in height. Veronica also found that she and her clones sprouted functional insect wings during the shrinking and replication process.

Wow, that was weird, Veronica and all of her clones thought in unison.

There are *hundreds*, perhaps *thousands* of me, Veronica and all of her clones thought. And I - - we - - are all approximately one-half inch in height.

And I - - we - - just realized, that I - - we - - are a hive-mind, she thought.

Soon, Veronica and her clones tried their wings and flew around.

I didn't have these wings until I started shrinking and replicating, Veronica and her clones thought in unison.

But I can't be like this for the rest of my life, she and her clones thought. Maybe if I will myself to get bigger.

Veronica willed herself to get bigger. As she grew, she and her clones merged back together until she was back to her normal height and alone.

This is wonderful, she thought. I now have amazing powers which I can use to become a superheroine. All I need now is a costume.

Veronica picked up the phone and called Stanley Stevens. Soon, she got an answer.

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"Hello, Stanley?" Veronica asked. "This is Veronica Van de Camp, the wealthy socialite. I'm at my researcher job at Garrett Laboratories. I was wondering if you could make a bee costume for me? You see, I've given myself the powers of a bunch of bees and one of my powers is that I can shrink and replicate myself into tiny clones with a hive mind."

Soon, there was a brief pause.

"You'll make the costume for me? *And* you'll have it ready for me by early this afternoon?" An excited and ecstatic Veronica asked. "*Wonderful!*"

"Oh, and I would also need a means of transportation," she added. "After all, a superheroine needs to be able to get to where she is needed, and she *certainly can't* take the bus, subway, or a taxi."

Soon, there was another brief pause and Veronica was very elated.

"And you say you'll have a special vehicle ready for me by early this afternoon, also?" She asked. "Stanley, you're a total doll."

Later, at twelve noon, Veronica got a phone call in her lab.

"Hello?" Veronica answered.

There was a brief pause.

"Stanley," an elated Veronica said.

There was another brief pause.

"You have my costume and special vehicle ready? That's wonderful," she said.

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There was another brief pause.

"And you want me to come outside right now?" She asked. "Okay."

Veronica left her lab and soon left the building.

Once she was outside, Veronica saw Stanley Stevens in the parking lot proudly standing next to a vehicle which looked like a brand new Corvette.

"Hi, Ronnie," a smiling Stanley said. "I'm Stanley Stevens. We spoke over the phone this morning."

"You said you had my costume and special vehicle ready," Veronica said.

"Shhh," Stanley cautioned while whispering. "Careful. You don't want anyone to hear you. If you want to be a superheroine, you gotta keep your identity a secret. Otherwise, you could be placing your family and friends in *terrible danger*."

"Oops," a whispering Veronica said. "I never thought about that. I'm sorry."

"It's okay," a whispering Stanley said. "Let's get inside this beauty right here."

"And you're gonna be doing the driving," he told her.

Veronica walked over to the driver's side of the brand new Corvett as Stanley went to the passenger side. Once they were inside the car, they closed the doors behind them. They drove off.

As they drove through the city, Stanley spotted a dead end nearby

"See that dead end over there?" Stanley asked. "Let's pull into it."

Veronica follows Stanley's advice. Once they were inside the dead end, they stopped.

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Stanley opened the glove compartment and pulled out a package which he handed to Veronica.

"Here," he told Veronica. "This is for you."

Veronica opened up the package and saw the superhero costume Stanley had made for her. She was beside herself with happiness. The superhero costume consisted of a leotard, thigh-high boots, opera gloves, and a flared eye mask which were all bright yellow. The leotard, which exposed the arms, shoulders, and legs, had a bee insignia on the chest as well as three V-formed black stripes which were on the front and back and went from the mid-section to the waist. The opera gloves each had a V-formed black stripe on the forearm while the thigh-high boots each had a V-formed black stripe just below the knee.

"Thank you, Stanley," Veronica gushed.

"Now, why don't you try it on," Stanley said. "And don't worry, I won't look."

Stanley looked away as Veronica donned her new superhero costume.

"Stanley? You can look now," Veronica said.

Stanley turned around and saw Veronica in her new costume.

"So, how do I look?" She asked.

"You look great," a gushing Stanley answered. "But you need a superhero name."

Stanley pondered for a while and quickly came up with a good name.

"I know. Since you have the powers of a bee and can shrink and replicate into tiny duplicates of yourself with a hive mind, how about - - BEEHIVE?"

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"I like it," Veronica said. "But, where's my special vehicle?"

"Computer, activate vehicular transformation," Stanley said to the Corvette.

Before Veronica's startled eyes, the Corvette transformed into a sleek yellow and black bee-shaped flying Bimmer car with six legs which were actually robotic claw arms. Three of the legs were on the left side of the car while the other three were on the right side.

"Incredible," a surprised Veronica said. "How did the car change like that?"

"I installed a special device that could alter the Corvette on a molecular level into a souped-up vehicle unlike any other," Stanley replied.

"Now, let's get back inside and take it for a spin, huh?" Stanley asked.

Beehive got into the car's driver side, while Stanley got in the passenger's seat next to her.

"Okay, Beehive," Stanley said. "Get this baby airborne."

The bee-shaped car lifted up and flew off.

"This is *truly amazing*, Stanley," a gushing Beehive said. "Thank you!"

"This baby is able to fly thanks to anti-gravity technology and jets capable of propelling it at a speed of 1600 kilometers per hour," Stanley told her.

As you can see, this super-car is equipped with a crime computer and a closed-circuit television for video surveillance," Stanley explained. "There's a compartment for tiny surveillance drones that look like bees."

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Which used to belong to my ally, Leonard Larvan, before I modified them, he thought.

"The 'legs' on the sides of this super-car are actually robotic claw arms that can be used to grasp, hold, and even throw objects," Stanley explained. "Let's go and test 'em, shall we?"

The bee-shaped super-car flew off until it approached a nearby salvage yard.

"This place is *perfect*," Stanley said. "Take her down."

Beehive took the super-car closer until it landed closer to one of the old cars.

"Now, I want you to use the robot arms to pick up and hold one of those cars," Stanley told her.

Through the dashboard, Beehive manipulated the robot arms to grasp the nearest car, and then hold it.

"It worked," a thrilled Beehive said.

"Now, throw it," Stanley said. "But, move this baby a few feet back first."

After moving the car back a few feet, Beehive, using the controls on her dashboard manipulated the robot arms to throw the car it picked up back onto the pile it was on.

"Now, there's *one more thing* you have gotta check out," Stanley told her. "Take this baby to a condemned building."

"Why there?" Beehive asked.

"You'll see," Stanley answered.

The bee-shaped super-car flew off until it reached a nearby condemned building.

"Here we are," Stanley said. "Now, flip the red switch."

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Beehive pushed the red button, and the center of the super-car's front hood opened up to reveal a mounted lightning gun.

"Now, push the red button next to the red switch," Stanley said.

Beehive did so, and the gun discharged a powerful arc of electricity that blasted the condemned building.

"That is your powerful weapon," Stanley said. "I call it the 'Stinger'."

And I've got the perfect name for my new super-car," Beehive said.

"What is it?" A beaming Stanley asked. "Lay it on me!"

"How about - -," Beehive said. "- - the *BUMBLEBIMMER*?"

"I *like* it," a beaming and enthusiastic Stanley said.

Beehive then looked at the time on the dashboard.

"Uh oh, my lunch hour is almost up," she told Stanley.

"Well, we were done with testing the Bumblebimmer's weapons and equipment anyway," Stanley said. "Let's go back to the dead end where we came from."

"You got it," Beehive said as she piloted her new super-car and flew off.

In minutes, the Bumblebimmer returned to the dead end where it came from and landed on the asphalt.

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Beehive got out of the super-car and changed back to her civilian clothes while Stanley looked away.

Veronica and Stanley then turned their attention to the Bumblebimmer.

"Computer, activate vehicular reversion," Stanley said.

The Bumblebimmer transformed back into the Corvette.

"Well, I have to get back to my lab now," Stanley said.

"But, how will you get there?" Veronica asked.

Stanley activated a remote control on his watch.

"Don't worry," a smiling Stanley assured her. "My ride will be here in a few minutes."

"Now, you go ahead and return to your job," he added.

"Okay," Veronica said before kissing Stanley on the cheek. "And thanks again."

Veronica got back into her car, pulled out of the dead end, and drove off.

That night, the Sprintress zoomed through the city at superhuman speed looking for Epoxy.

Soon, she found him and Lubricator breaking into a museum. Epoxy was equipped with an upgraded glue gun and glue tank backpack. Lubricator wore a special frictionless bodysuit with gripping pads on the gloves as well as wrist-mounted oil-shooters.

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Bingo, she thought. I've found Epoxy. But, who's that woman with him?

Oh, well. I'll bring him - - *and her* - - in," the Sprintress thought as she headed for the perpetrators.

"Here she comes," Epoxy told Lubricator.

"I'm ready," Lubricator said.

As the Sprintress approached them, Lubricator squirted out a stream of oil at the ground beneath the superheroine's feet, causing her to slip and fall.

Lubricator turned to Epoxy.

"Okay, Epoxy. Now, while the Sprintress is still trying to get up," she said.

"Gotcha," Epoxy said as he aimed his new glue gun at the door at close range. The gun fired a high-pressure glue blast.

"BLAM!" The doors to the museum were knocked down with incredible force.

With the doors blown down, Epoxy and Lubricator quickly went inside.

"How did that new upgraded glue gun Mr. DeMeo gave you work out?" Lubricator asked Epoxy as they hurried toward their goal.

"Like a *charm*," Epoxy replied with a sinister smile.

Soon, they reached their goal, a treasure worth billions of dollars.

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"The Zallman Treasure," Lubricator said.

"Now *that's* what I call a *big score*," Epoxy said.

Outside the museum, the Bumblebimmer arrived on the scene. The vehicle's robot claws picked up the Sprintress, lifted her out of the puddle of oil, and set her down away from it.

Once the Bumblebimmer landed, Beehive immediately got out to check on the super-fast heroine.

"Sprintress, are you okay," Beehive asked.

"Yeah, thanks," the Sprintress answered. "Who are you?"

"I'm Beehive," the insect-themed heroine replied. "And I'm here to help."

"Then, let's get in that museum and stop Epoxy and his accomplice," the super-fast heroine said.

"By all means," Beehive said as she and the Sprintress quickly went inside the museum. The two superheroines saw Epoxy and Lubricator about to make off with the Zallman Treasure.

"Not so fast, you two," the Sprintress told the criminals, who set the treasure down.

"Epoxy, I'll handle the Sprintress and you handle Bumblebee Girl," Lubricator told Epoxy.

"The name's Beehive," Beehive said.

"Whatever," Lubricator told Beehive before turning toward Epoxy. The two costumed criminals turned their attentions to their targets, Epoxy toward Beehive and Lubricator toward the Sprintress.

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"LET'S GET 'EM," Lubricator said.

Epoxy started firing bursts of impact paste rapidly from his high-pressure glue gun at Beehive who used her superhuman agility to dodge as many as she could. Lubricator shot streams of oil at the Sprintress who used her superhuman speed to dodge them.

"That trick won't work on me again," Sprintress said before coming at Lubricator from behind and grabbing the female criminal. However, Lubricator's costume was coated with a frictionless substance making it impossible for the Sprintress to grab her.

I don't believe it, the super-fast heroine thought. She actually managed to slip through my fingers! *Literally!*

With a combination of skills in ice-skating and basic hand-to-hand combat, Lubricator was able to tag the Sprintress herself.

Beehive was still dodging the rapid-fire impact glue blasts from Epoxy's glue gun but was starting to tire.

I can't keep this up forever, the new superheroine admitted.

At will, Beehive quickly shrank and replicated. She and all of her clones split up and dispersed, getting out of the way of the viscous missile.

"WHERE'D YOU GO?! WHERE'D YOU GO?!" Epoxy exclaimed.

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Quickly moving behind her opponent, Beehive quickly willed herself to get bigger. As she grew, she and her clones merged back together until she was back to her normal height and being one person. Then, she quickly discharged her short bee-like stingers from the backs of her hands and punched him, with the stingers injecting him. Epoxy was down for the count.

At the same time, the Sprintress was still getting tagged by Lubricator. Finally, the Queen of Quickness tripped up her opponent.

After removing Lubricator's oil-shooters and throwing them aside, the Lady of Locomotion quickly grabbed Epoxy's paste gun and used it to hold the costumed perpetrators for the police.

The Sprintress turned to Beehive and proffered her hand for a handshake. Beehive accepted.

"Good work, Miss - -?" The Queen of Quickness asked.

"Beehive, Sprintress," Beehive replied. "New York's newest superheroine."

"Well, you've certainly been a big help," the Sprintress said. "And I wish you the best of luck in your career."

"Thank you," Beehive said as she smiled.

The two superheroines each went their own separate ways. The Sprintress zoomed off at superhuman speed while Beehive returned to her Bumblebimmer and flew off.

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The next day, at Garrett Labs, Nellie greeted Veronica.

"Good morning, Veronica," Nellie said.

"Good morning to you, too, Nellie," Veronica said.

"Did you do anything interesting last night?" Nellie asked.

"Nothing much. I just went to the museum," Veronica answered. "What about you?"

"Oh, I went to the museum, too," Nellie replied.

"But, I didn't see you there," Veronica said.

"Well, actually, I was there in spirit," Nellie said.

THE END

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