

The Techni-Crusader #3 - "To Fight the Invincible Foe"

Written by Steven Bland

Streaking through the cosmos, a large radioactive meteor headed for Earth and soon entered its atmosphere.

Meanwhile, in a wooded area in upstate New York that night, a criminal named Christopher Roth, who had just escaped from prison, was on the run from the U.S. Marshals. Christopher was a tall, strapping bald man in an orange standard-issue prison uniform.

I *lost* 'em, Roth thought as he briefly glanced behind him while he ran. He didn't see any U.S. Marshals following him. Suddenly, the glowing radioactive space rock struck a few feet in front of him and he was soon bathed in the meteor's unearthly radiation.

"Unhhh," the criminal moaned. "I feel so *strange*."

The radiation from the meteor filled Christopher's body and mind with fantastic energy. The mass and density of his muscles increased exponentially.

My *body* - - and my *mind* - - are being charged with *incredible energy*, he thought.

"What's *happening* to me?" Roth asked.

"I'll tell you what's happening, Roth," a male voice said from behind him. Roth turned around to find the owner of the voice and saw a Lieutenant named Geoff Drake and his team of U.S. Marshals, who all had their guns trained on him.

"You're going back to your cell," Lieutenant Drake said. "Surrender, now! Don't make us shoot!

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Hah, they don't suspect that I've become a *human dynamo* thanks to that hunk o' space rock that fell in front of me, Roth thought. I've gotten *stronger* - - physically *and* mentally. I can lick *all* of these U.S. Marshals *easily!*

"Go ahead! Shoot," Roth said defiantly. "You *can't* stop me!"

"FIRE," the Lieutenant commanded his team of U.S. Marshals. They, and soon, he fired their rifles upon Roth. However, their bullets bounced off the criminal.

"HAH," a smirking Roth taunted. "IS THAT THE *BEST* YOU'VE GOT?!!"

"I - I don't *believe* it, Lieutenant," said one of the Marshals. "Our bullets just *bounced right off* him!"

"NOW IT'S *MY* TURN," Roth crowed loudly as he used his new-found telekinetic powers on the Marshals' weapons, which flew out of their hands and into his. Then, Roth easily crushed each of the rifles with his bare hands.

"And now, he's crumpling our rifles as if they were paper," added another Marshal.

Roth then used his telekinetic powers to fly toward Lt. Drake and the Marshals.

"You're not dealin' with an *ordinary killer, now*," Roth said as he alighted near them.

"I'm *stronger* and *tougher* than *all of you* put together," Roth boasted as he quickly overpowered all of the Marshals.

"And a *whole lot meaner*," Roth added as he moved in for the kill.

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A loud, fearful cry from Lieutenant Drake and his team of U.S. Marshals soon rang out through the woods.

"NOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!"

Later, at the Chase household in Rego Park, Queens, Kevin and his mother were watching television when a news report suddenly came on.

"This just in," the reporter said. "Convicted murderer, Christopher Roth escaped from prison earlier tonight and was pursued by Lieutenant Geoff Drake and his team of U.S. Marshals. According to a couple of eyewitnesses who were there, Roth was last seen in a wooded area in upstate New York, but Lt. Drake and his men eventually caught up to him. When Roth refused to surrender, Lt. Drake and his men fired their rifles on him, but their bullets had no effect. Roth had somehow gained superhuman power, which he used to easily overpower *and* kill Lt. Drake and all of his men."

"Christopher Roth is *still at large*," the reporter continued. "And all residents are to lock themselves indoors until the danger is over."

"Christopher Roth! If that murderer was dangerous before, he's even more so now, with his new powers," Laura Chase said. "May God help us all."

"I'm going after Roth, mom," Kevin told his mother. "With the armor from the Zeotronix, I stand a *better chance* of fighting him."

"NO," Laura said emphatically. "It's *too dangerous*. You'll just get yourself *killed!*"

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"We have just received *another* bulletin," the reporter added. "Christopher Roth is now at Manhattan's East Side, hovering in mid-air and causing mass destruction to its buildings with telekinetic force blasts resulting in massive amounts of property damage as citizens flee in terror. SWAT teams are arriving on the scene to try and stop Roth."

The television reporter then cut to footage of SWAT teams arriving and getting out their weapons.

"CHRISTOPHER ROTH," the SWAT captain told the super-powered criminal. "GIVE YOURSELF UP, NOW!!"

"HAH," scoffed Roth. "I killed a bunch of U.S. Marshals *hours ago!* What makes you think *you* can stop me?!"

The SWAT captain turned to his team.

"ALL RIGHT, MEN," the SWAT captain told them. "LET'S TAKE HIM DOWN, *NOW!!*"

The SWAT captain, his team, and the other SWAT teams fired their assault rifles at Roth but they had no effect on the criminal.

"HAH," scoffed Roth.

The SWAT captain turned his attention to his men.

"STINGER GRENADES!! *NOW,*" ordered the SWAT captain. The SWAT teams launched stinger grenades at Roth, but they, like the assault rifles, had no effect on the criminal.

The SWAT captain turned his attention to his men.

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"TEAR GAS, *NOW*," ordered the SWAT captain. The SWAT teams launched tear gas grenades at Roth, but they, too, had no effect on him.

"CAPTAIN, WE TRIED *EVERYTHING* AND *NOTHING* WORKED," one of the SWAT cops told the captain.

"Then, there's *nothing* we can do," the SWAT captain said.

Then, the television reporter came back on the air.

"SWAT teams have tried *everything* they could to subdue Roth, but were ultimately, *unsuccessful*," the reporter lamented. "Christopher Roth is now *invincible*."

"May God help us all," a concerned Laura said as she turned off the television set.

"I'm going down to the East Side, now," Kevin told his mother.

"NO," Laura said emphatically.

"Mom, if those SWAT cops couldn't stop Roth, then maybe it's up to *me* to do it," Kevin protested. "I have the Zeotronix armor at my command. With it, I took down Caliguax and, most recently, James Lanza. Believe me, mom, I *can* do this."

"You're right, Kevin," a concerned Laura said. "But, even though you have that alien suit of armor, you're *still* my baby, and I can't help but *worry* about you. I *always* will. Just - - be careful."

"I will, mom," Kevin said as he kissed his mother goodbye before leaving the house. Soon, Kevin was out the front door.

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I've got to stop him before he can hurt or kill anyone else, Kevin thought as he headed for a secluded area. Once inside the secluded area, he mentally commanded the Zeotronix on his wrist to cover him head-to-toe in silver-and-green powered bio-armor. With his transformation complete, Kevin, as the Techni-Crusader, took to the sky.

Soon, the hero arrived at Manhattan's East Side and saw Roth, hovering in mid-air, continuing to wreck the city.

There he is, Techni-Crusader thought.

"TAG! YOU'RE IT," Techni-Crusader exclaimed as he hit Roth with a powerful pulse bolt but it had no effect on him.

Roth turned toward the hero.

"WHO *DARES*?" Roth asked angrily.

I don't *believe* it! My blast didn't *faze* him, Techni-Crusader thought. But, at least it got his attention.

"THAT WOULD BE *ME*," Techni-Crusader answered. "THE *TECHNI-CRUSADER!* AND I'M PUTTING AN *END* TO YOUR RAMPAGE RIGHT *HERE*, RIGHT *NOW!*"

"IS *THAT* SO?" Roth asked. "JUST TRY AND *STOP* ME!!"

Techni-Crusader then flew toward Roth and laid a barrage of his strongest blows on the criminal. However, Roth was unfazed by them.

It's no use, Techni-Crusader thought. My punches have no effect on him either.

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Roth then delivered a powerful punch to the hero. Techni-Crusader was sent flying at an incredible speed.

"Hah," Roth replied. "As easy as swatting a fly!"

His powers are *beyond* those of ordinary men, Techni-Crusader thought as he was still hurtling through the air. But, I *can't* give up! That's *not* an option!

But, *first thing* I've got to do, is stop myself from crashing into a building and turning into hamburger, Techni-Crusader thought as he struggled to right himself. He soon did and used his boot jets to fly out of harm's way and toward Roth.

Roth must have a weak spot *somewhere*, Techni-Crusader thought. And I'm going to *find it*.

As Techni-Crusader headed toward him, Roth immediately used his telekinetic powers to break off an I-beam from a nearby building that was under construction. Once it was broken free, the I-beam quickly flew toward Roth's hands and he grasped it like a baseball player.

"Hey, 'Techni-Crusader', I believe the proper expression here is - -," Roth said with an evil grin as he saw the incoming Techni-Crusader coming closer.

"- - '*BATTER UP*'," Roth exclaimed as he swung the I-beam toward the hero and hit him very hard.

"UNNHH," Techni-Crusader exclaimed. The hero was sent flying at incredible speed toward a nearby building.

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"AAAGGHHH," Techni-Crusader exclaimed as he hit the building very hard, crashing through the brick wall and into someone's apartment on the thirteenth floor.

"*WHAT IN THE WORLD?!*" The resident asked before he tended to Techni-Crusader. "Are you all right?"

"Yeah, just *peachy!* I'm lucky my armor protected me from most of the impact from the crash. Otherwise, I would have broken *every single bone* in my body," Techni-Crusader said.

Soon, the hero experienced pain from the crash.

"Ow! I'm gonna feel *that* tomorrow," Techni-Crusader said as he struggled to get back up on his feet.

Then, the hero and the apartment's resident looked up and saw Roth, appearing before them, hovering in mid-air outside the hole in the wall.

"Provided *there is* a tomorrow," Techni-Crusader said.

"*Still alive*, eh?" Roth asked. "*I'll* fix that!"

The resident quickly moved in front of Techni-Crusader and faced Roth.

"You *want* him, you'll have to go through *me*, first," the resident told Roth.

"*No*," Techni-Crusader told the resident. "He's too dangerous! *I'll* handle him! You get out of here as *fast* as you can!"

"But," the resident protested.

"*NOW*," the hero told the resident. The latter complied and immediately left the apartment.

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"Noble gesture, Techni-Crusader," Roth said as he telekinetically pulled the hero toward his opened left hand. Soon, the criminal literally had Techni-Crusader by the throat.

"Too bad it'll be *your last*," Roth said.

Channeling some of his telekinetic power into his own body to augment his already superhuman strength, Roth formed his right hand into a fist, which he then cocked.

"This is *one punch* you're not gonna walk away from, 'Techni-Crusader'," Roth said with a sneer.

Gotta do *something*, Techni-Crusader thought. *Any* second now, he's going to throw that punch at me. I'm in *too much pain* to dodge that fist, but if I *don't*, I'm a *goner*!

The desperate hero clenched his fists and tried to raise his arms, which he managed to do. Then, he struck the criminal behind both his ears.

"GAAHHH," Roth exclaimed as he released Techni-Crusader, who quickly activated his boot jets and flew out of the criminal's range. The hero stopped in mid-air and watched Roth as he clutched his ears in pain.

Well, *whaddaya know*? Techni-Crusader thought. His weak spot is *behind his ears*.

"AARRGGHHH!! THE *PAIN*," Roth screamed as he flew out through the hole in the wall and headed downward.

"Where are you going?" Techni-Crusader said as he flew after Roth. "The fun's just *getting started*!"

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Techni-Crusader quickly fired a pulse bolt behind his ears.

"AARRGGHHH," Roth screamed in pain.

The criminal fell to, and hit, the ground very hard. However, he managed to survive the impact, thanks to his superhuman durability.

Roth slowly picked himself up. As he did, Techni-Crusader descended toward him.

"Had enough?" Techni-Crusader asked as he alighted near Roth, who turned his attention to the hero.

"PREPARE TO *DIE*, TECHNICAL-CRUSADER," Roth exclaimed as he lunged toward his enemy.

"I'll take that as a 'No'," Techni-Crusader said as he again fired pulse bolts behind the criminal's ears.

"GAAAHHH!! *NOT AGAIN*," screamed Roth as he clutched his ears in pain.

"Good night," Techni-Crusader said before he punched Roth, who soon fell to the ground again and was down for the count.

Soon, the SWAT cops, who had tried unsuccessfully to stop Roth, walk up to Techni-Crusader and the fallen criminal.

"He's all yours, guys," Techni-Crusader told the SWAT cops.

"How did *you* stop him when *we* couldn't?" The SWAT captain asked the hero.

"I hit his *weak spot*," Techni-Crusader answered. "It was *behind his ears*."

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"But, what'll we *do* with him?" One of the SWAT cops asked. "I don't think even a maximum security prison can hold him at this point.

Suddenly, Roth began to stir.

"Unnhh," Roth moaned.

"Captain, he's coming around," another SWAT cop told the captain.

"Remember to aim your weapons behind his ears," the SWAT captain said. Soon, he, his SWAT teams, and Techni-Crusader aimed their weapons at Roth.

Roth looked at Techni-Crusader and immediately threw a punch at him. However, the criminal broke his hand.

"OWWW," Roth exclaimed in pain.

"It looks like Roth won't be any trouble for a *good long while*, Captain," Techni-Crusader told the SWAT captain. "His powers are gone."

"Take him away, officers," Techni-Crusader said as he handed Roth to the SWAT cops.

"With *pleasure*," the SWAT captain said as he placed the cuffs on Roth. As the SWAT cops took the criminal into custody, Techni-Crusader was deep in thought.

According to that first report, Roth somehow gained his superpowers in that wooded area in upstate New York, Techni-Crusader thought. I need to go there and find the answer. Soon, the hero activated his boot jets and zoomed off.

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In minutes, Techni-Crusader approached the wooded area in upstate New York where Roth was on the run from U.S. Marshals and saw a strange glow as well as several decayed trees and plant life that were the result of the strange glow.

Oh, man, the hero thought. All those *dead* trees and plants. That glow is *obviously* radioactive. I've got to get a good look, but I *must* keep my distance. I don't know if my armor will protect me from it.

Techni-Crusader rose high into the air and used his helmet's telescopic vision. Soon, the hero got a good look at the radiation's source as it popped into view: the large meteor that fell to Earth.

Aha, Techni-Crusader thought. *There's* my answer.

So *that's* what gave Roth his superhuman powers, Techni-Crusader thought. A large radioactive meteor, as big as a boulder. I've *got* to get rid of it, but *how*?

Maybe I should contact Zimbor and consult with him, Techni-Crusader thought. After all, he did create this bio-armor. The hero used his helmet's communication technology to contact the Zartronian who had created the Zeotronix and its armor.

"Zimbor, are you there?" Techni-Crusader asked.

"Kevin?" Zimbor responded over the communications system in the hero's helmet.

"Yeah, it's me," Techni-Crusader replied. "I'm in a wooded area in upstate New York where there's a huge radioactive meteor that's as big as a boulder and its radiation is killing all trees and plant life around it. I'm not sure if the Zeotronix armor can protect me from the radioactivity."

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"It *can*, and it *will*," Zimbor replied assuringly over Techni-Crusader's helmet communications system. "I, myself, designed the Zeotronix to withstand the *harshest* environments."

"Great," Techni-Crusader replied in relief. "Thanks, Zimbor." The communication was soon ended.

Techni-Crusader dove toward the meteor and picked it up. With the meteor in his hands, the hero rocketed toward the sky at incredible speed, until he was up in outer space and far away from Earth.

Then, Techni-Crusader threw the space rock as far away as possible and then blasted it with his pulse bolts. The meteor was destroyed.

That's *that*, Techni-Crusader thought. Now, all that's left is to *go home*. Soon, he rocketed toward Earth and entered its atmosphere.

When Zimbor said that he designed the Zeotronix armor to withstand the harshest environment, I sure hope he also meant *atmospheric re-entry*, the hero thought. Much to Techni-Crusader's relief, his armor did protect him as he made it back to Earth.

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Sure is *nice* to be back on Terra Firma, the hero thought. And it'll be *even nicer* to be back home.

Soon, Techni-Crusader was heading for his house in Rego Park, Queens.

THE END



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