

The Techni-Crusader #6 - "The Diabolical Dr. Menagerie"

Written by Steven Bland

Inside his laboratory, a scientist was putting the finishing touches on a high-tech amulet-like device.

"It's almost ready," he said to himself. "Soon, it will give me limitless power. Power I will use to take over and rule the world!"

Soon, the device was finished. It had two small studs, one on each opposite side. The scientist took off his shirt and placed the device on his bare chest. Once he pressed the two studs at the same time, the device soon affixed itself to his body.

"Now I must test my new powers," the scientist said. "This amulet I designed should give me access to the morphogenetic field of the Earth itself and allow me to summon the abilities of *any* creature in the animal kingdom. Abilities that my amulet will magnify *many* times."

"I must think of an animal - - *any* animal - - that is capable of superhuman strength," he added. The first animal that came to his mind was an elephant. As he concentrated on the elephant, his amulet began to glow with energy, which was coursing through his entire body.

"I *do* feel much stronger," he said. "But, I need something to test my new strength."

He looked around for something heavy to lift and found a nearby cast iron block.

"Perfect," he muttered with a smile as he walked toward it.

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Then, he attempted to lift the cast iron block and he did it effortlessly.

"YES! IT *WORKED*," the scientist crowed. "I HAVE THE STRENGTH OF AN ELEPHANT MAGNIFIED MANY TIMES!"

"NOW, I MUST TRY *ANOTHER ANIMAL!*" He added.

The scientist then thought of a spider and concentrated on it. The amulet on his chest, again, glowed with energy which infused his body. He attempted to climb a nearby wall, which he did successfully.

"MY DEVICE IS A *SUCCESS*," the scientist exclaimed with joy. "I HAVE BECOME THE *MOST POWERFUL MAN ON EARTH!* NOW, I AM READY TO MAKE MY DREAM OF WORLD CONQUEST A *REALITY!* SOON, THE WORLD WILL BOW BEFORE *DR. MENAGERIE!*"

"But first, I must destroy the *one person* who might get in my way - -," Dr. Menagerie said. "- THE TECHNI-CRUSADER!!"

The scientist called on the hypersonic flight of the peregrine falcon and flew out of his laboratory window.

"I will search for him. But, if I am unable to find him," he vowed. "I will draw him out and make him come to me."

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Meanwhile, the Techni-Crusader was flying through the city in pursuit of a stolen car which had a baby on board. Upon gaining on the vehicle, the armored superhero landed right behind the car and grabbed its bumper, preventing it from going any further.

Soon, the car stopped running. Techni-Crusader set the vehicle down and went to the driver's side window.

"All right," the armored superhero said. "Out of the car! *Now!*"

The thief and his passenger-side accomplice complied. A police car soon arrived on the scene.

As the officers arrested the thieves, the Techni-Crusader checked on the baby girl who was fortunately sound asleep.

Good. She's safe, the relieved superhero thought. She probably slept through the whole thing.

Soon, he flew off.

As he flew through the city, the Techni-Crusader was spotted by Dr. Menagerie.

There he is! I've found him at last, the mad scientist thought.

Dr. Menagerie dove toward him with incredible speed. Upon reaching the Techni-Crusader, the mad scientist again called on the power of the elephant, but for its weight, which was magnified many times, causing the hero to plummet to the ground. At the last second before impact, Dr. Menagerie called on the speed and leaping ability of the jackrabbit to move to safety.

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"What was *that*?" The Techni-Crusader asked as he got up.

"Not *'what'*, fool," Dr. Menagerie's voice rang out, attracting the armored superhero's attention. "*WHO*," Dr. Menagerie said as he used the jackrabbit's speed to quickly move toward him. Once he approached the armored hero, the mad scientist then called on the strength of a grizzly and grabbed his opponent in a very powerful bear hug, squeezing the very life out of him and crushing his armor.

C-Can't - - breathe! He's - - crushing - - me! A-And - - my - - armor, Techni-Crusader thought.

The armored superhero was soon rendered unconscious with his armor dented around him by the tight squeeze.

"I'VE *DONE* IT," Dr. Menagerie crowed. "I HAVE *BEATEN* THE TECHNI-CRUSADER!"

"*NOW*, I AM READY TO MAKE MY DREAM OF WORLD CONQUEST A *REALITY*," the mad scientist added. "*SOON*, THE WORLD'S LEADERS WILL BOW BEFORE DR. MENAGERIE!"

Calling again upon the speed and flight of the peregrine falcon, Dr. Menagerie quickly flew off. As the Techni-Crusader lay unconscious, his armor was repairing itself. The process took only seconds. Then, the armor unsheathed Kevin's body, returning him to his civilian clothes.

Minutes later, Kevin regained consciousness and found Zimbor and Barylen standing over and next to him.

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"Unnhhh," Kevin moaned as he tried to get up.

"Kevin, are you all right?" Zimbor asked him.

"Yeah. How long was I out?" Kevin asked.

"Five minutes," Zimbor answered. "You would have been unconscious for hours had Barylen and I not revived you."

"Where did you and Barylen come from?" Kevin asked. "And how did you two get here without your spaceship?"

"Zimbor and I arrived here with the help of our newest invention," Barylen said as he took out a small portable cylindrical device, which he showed Kevin.

"We call it, the Omni-Key," Barylen continued. "It can open a portal to anywhere in the universe. Allow me to demonstrate."

Barylen activated the Omni-Key and it opened a portal before Kevin's eyes. The portal showed Zimbor's and Barylen's lab on Zartron.

"Wow, that is *amazing!*" Kevin gushed. "Is that your lab?"

"Yes," Barylen answered.

"Awesome," an impressed Kevin said with a smile.

Then, Kevin remembered Dr. Menagerie.

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"I've got to get after him," he muttered.

"Who?" Zimbor asked.

"Dr. Menagerie," Kevin replied. "He's a mad scientist who found a way to give himself the powers of the entire animal kingdom. I overheard him say something about making the world's leaders bow before him. I think he's going to go to the United Nations Building and try to take over the entire world!"

"Aren't you forgetting something?" Barylen asked.

Kevin looked at himself and noticed that he was in his street clothes and that his armor was folded into his Zeotronix.

Then, he turned his attention back to Zimbor and Barylen.

"What happened to my armor?" Kevin asked.

"When you lost consciousness, your armor retracted into the Zeotronix on your wrist," Zimbor answered. "Now that you have regained consciousness, you can will it to sheathe you again."

"Oh, right. Thanks," Kevin said, before mentally commanding the Zeotronix on his wrist to again sheathe him in his green and silver powered bio-armor. In seconds, the transformation was complete.

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"Good luck, Kevin," Zimbor said.

The Techni-Crusader soon activated his boot jets and lifted off the ground.

"Thank you, Zimbor," he told his alien benefactor, before taking off.

Soon, the Techni-Crusader was flying through the city as fast as he possibly could.

Dr. Menagerie had a good head start, the armored superhero thought. I just hope I won't be too late to stop him.

Upon reaching his destination, Dr. Menagerie switched to the wall-crawling of the gecko to stick to the outer wall and to crawl to the window of the United Nations Security Council Chamber. Breaking open a window, Dr. Menagerie entered through it, startling the world leaders.

Suddenly, guards arrived carrying guns.

"Hold it right there," one of the guards said. "Make one move and we'll shoot!"

Dr. Menagerie made a move and the guards shot at him, but their bullets bounced off of the scientist's body, due to his skin now being body armor.

"Hah, your bullets are *nothing* to a man with the *armor of a beetle*," Dr. Menagerie crowed.

Then, switching to the speed of a cheetah, the scientist quickly grabbed the guards' guns. Then, with the strength of the bear, he easily crushed them.

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"And *that's* just a small sample of my powers," Dr. Menagerie said.

"Now hear this! I am Dr. Menagerie," he said. "And I am *taking over the world!*"

"Non," the French leader answered. "You will *not* get away with this!"

"I have the powers of the entire animal kingdom at my disposal, and can summon any one of those powers at will. And each one of those powers is magnified many times," the scientist said.

"Such as the dragon millipede's ability to shoot deadly hydrogen cyanide," Dr. Menagerie added as he shot the deadly gas toward the world leaders, poisoning them.

The Techni-Crusader arrived at the United Nations building and quickly entered through the broken window. Upon entering, he saw Dr. Menagerie and, then, the poisoned world leaders.

Oh no! I'm too late, the armored superhero thought, before turning his attention to the mad scientist.

"The world leaders," Techni-Crusader said. "YOU - - YOU'VE *KILLED THEM!*"

"They're not dead, *yet!* But they *will be* in *minutes!* Thanks to the hydrogen cyanide of the dragon millipede. I failed to kill you last time, Techni-Crusader" Dr. Menagerie said before lunging toward the armored superhero. "But, I *won't* fail now!"

Soon, the two combatants were grappling with each other.

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"Zimbor, I was too late," Techni-Crusader said softly over his armor's communication system. "Dr. Menagerie used the dragon millipede's hydrogen cyanide to poison the world leaders and he's keeping me too busy to help them."

"It's alright, Kevin," Zimbor said over the communications system. "You worry about Dr. Menagerie. Barylen and I will tend to the world leaders."

"Thanks," the armored superhero said, before returning his attention to his opponent.

"How about we step outside?" The Techni-Crusader asked the mad scientist.

The armored hero activated his boot jets and took off with Dr. Menagerie in tow, flying out of the United Nations building.

After the two combatants left, an inter-dimensional portal opened inside the building and Zimbor and Barylen, carrying a case of anti-toxins with them, emerged from it. After closing the rift behind them, the two Zartronian scientists quickly opened the case and each took out a hypodermic needle full of anti-toxin.

"I don't know if the anti-toxin we devised will save these unfortunate men, Barylen," Zimbor said as he injected his hypodermic into one of the world leaders. "But we must try."

"Why are you so unsure if our anti-toxins can save them?" Barylen asked he injected his hypodermic into another one of the world leaders. "*Our* technologies and medical sciences are *far superior* to those of Earth's."

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"Because our biologies are vastly different from those of the humans on this planet, Barylen," Zimbora answered. "After we finish giving the anti-toxin to these men, all we can do next is what the humans here do when *they* are faced with uncertain outcomes."

"And what is that?" Barylen asked.

"We *pray*," Zimbora replied. "Let's get the other vials of anti-toxin and see to the other men in this building."

Zimbora and Barylen each quickly grabbed another vial of anti-toxin and repeated the ritual until all of the world leaders received a dose of the anti-toxin.

Meanwhile, high in the air, the battle between the Techni-Crusader and Dr. Menagerie resumed. Turning to face his enemy, the mad scientist accessed the vocal abilities of the lyrebird, unleashing a sonic scream that was painful to the hero's ears.

"AAARRRGHHH," the armored hero exclaimed as his captive continued to use the lyrebird's sonic scream.

C-Can't take much more of this, the Techni-Crusader thought as he looked for a nearby place that was deserted. He found one at the site of a condemned building.

There, the armored hero thought before arriving at the site and releasing his captive.

Freed from the Techni-Crusader's grasp, Dr. Menagerie attempted to escape by flying away, but the hero quickly noticed him.

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"Oh no, you don't," the armored hero said as he fired a low-intensity pulse bolt at the mad scientist, causing him to fall back down. "You're not getting away from me *that* easily!"

"Arrogant fool," Dr. Menagerie replied before moving toward the armored hero with the magnified speed of a puma and then hitting him with the magnified super-punch of the mantis shrimp, flooring him.

"OOOFFF," exclaimed the Techni-Crusader as he fell to the ground.

Wow, that was *some punch*, the hero thought before he picked himself up.

Gotta stop this guy, Techni-Crusader thought as he readied his pulse bolts.

However, Dr. Menagerie summoned the super-armor of the ironclad beetle and the pulse bolts soon had no effect on him.

It's no go, the armored superhero thought. He was able to armor up again quickly before I could act.

The mad scientist soon summoned the bio-luminescence of an Angler fish and created a laser-like beam from his head. He aimed the laser at the Techni-Crusader, hoping to cut through his suit, but the hero used the superhuman reflexes provided by his armor to instantly put up his energy shield to block the deadly beam.

"Not only can I summon animal abilities," Dr. Menagerie bragged. "But, I can twist some of them as well - - with *deadly results!*"

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He's *right*, Techni-Crusader thought. He's turned the bio-luminescence of an Angler fish into a *deadly laser*! If not for the shield I put up, it would have killed me!

Gotta put this guy out of commission once and for all, the armored hero thought as he looked for the mad scientist's weak spot and noticed the glowing amulet-like device on his bare chest.

That device on his chest must be the source of his power, the Techni-Crusader thought. If I can remove it - - and *destroy* it, - - he won't be much of a threat.

Dr. Menagerie steadily intensified the deadly laser, but the struggling armored hero managed to power on through, getting closer to his opponent inch by inch.

Gotta - - keep - - going! I'm - - almost - - *there*, the Techni-Crusader thought.

Within a few seconds, he closed in on the mad scientist and grabbed his high-tech amulet.

Pressing the sides of the amulet, the armored hero caused it to detach itself from Dr. Menagerie's chest. With the device removed, the Techni-Crusader crushed it into pieces.

"NNOOOO!!" Dr. Menagerie screamed. "MY BEAUTIFUL AMULET! YOU'VE *DESTROYED IT!*"

"Yeah. That was the *general idea*," the Techni-Crusader told his enemy. "And now that your amulet's toast, you're just an *ordinary guy!*"

"Who will soon be an ordinary *convict*," the armored superhero said as he grabbed the mad scientist and flew off with him.

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The Techni-Crusader and Dr. Menagerie arrived at a nearby police station, where, inside, the former dropped off the latter.

Once he was outside the station, the armored superhero flew off.

Now to head back to the U.N. Building and find out if Zimbor and Barylen were successful in their efforts to cure the world leaders of the hydrogen cyanide that Dr. Menagerie exposed them to, he thought.

Soon, the Techni-Crusader arrived at and entered the United Nations Building where he found, much to his relief, that the world leaders had completely recovered from the hydrogen cyanide.

They *did* it, the armored superhero thought as he smiled underneath his helmet. *Zimbor and Barylen* did it. Their anti-toxins saved the world leaders.

"Thank you, Zimbor and Barylen," Techni-Crusader said softly, through the armor's communications system.

"You are more than welcome," Zimbor said over the system. "Barylen and I were glad to be of service."

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Inside his prison cell, a now-powerless and brooding Dr. Menagerie sits on his cot and plots.

The Techni-Crusader beat me, but it was only through pure luck, he thought. For now, I will bide my time. But, I will invent a *new amulet* which will be *far more powerful* than my old one.

And, someday, once it's finished, I will challenge the Techni-Crusader again, he added. And, *that will be the day* when *Dr. Menagerie* will emerge *victorious!*

- THE END

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