

Freedom's Foursome #2 - "Fate is a Cruel Mistress"

Written by Steven Bland

Through the inside floor of a sophisticated laboratory in Long Island on a Friday night, a trail was being thrown up. The trail resembled the mound of earth left by moles in a garden, except the mound was in solid linoleum.

An army of large humanoid cyborg mole-like creatures, who each had a pneumatic drill mounted on its right arm, along with their master, Dr. Emil Barstow, a short mad scientist wearing a lab coat and goggles, soon surfaced inside the lab. Dr. Barstow and his creatures soon got to work stealing as much of the laboratory's equipment as they could.

"Be careful with those pieces of equipment, my creations," Dr. Barstow told his creatures.

"They are very delicate and vital for my experiments!"

Suddenly, Galvanex, Incredibelle, Fulgurite, and Coldfire arrived on the scene.

"Too bad you won't be able to conduct them where you're going," Galvanex told the mad scientist.

"That tip we got from Captain Kirby was right," Incredibelle told Galvanex. "There were a series of thefts of scientific equipment from laboratories all over New York that were committed by perpetrators who entered the labs by tunneling into them."

"And now that we've found said perpetrators," Fulgurite said. "What say we take care of them?"

"Excellent suggestion, Fulgurite," Galvanex said. "So let's do it."

Steven

Bland

Freedom's Foursome #2 - "Fate is a Cruel Mistress"

"Okay, but let's make this quick," Coldfire said. "There's somewhere else I've gotta be."

"Hot date?" Incredibelle quietly asked him.

"You could say that," Coldfire quietly said with a sly smile.

"DESTROY THEM," Dr. Barstow commanded his army. "DESTROY FREEDOM'S
FOURSOME!"

Fulgurite, using his superhuman strength, rock-like body, and electrical powers, subdued the first unit of the army of creatures.

Incredibelle, increasing her personal density, made short work of the second unit.

Galvanex, converting his fists into large piledrivers and stretching, defeated the third and final unit of the army of mole-like creatures.

"That's everyone," Galvanex said.

"Not quite everyone," Coldfire said as he saw Dr. Barstow attempting to escape.

"Freeze," the superhero said before using his ice flames to flash-freeze the mad scientist inside a block of ice. "And I *mean* that quite *literally*!"

Captain Kirby, Lieutenant Scioli, and their SWAT team soon arrived on the scene to take Dr. Emil Barstow and his large cyborg mole minions into custody.

"Thanks again, Freedom's Foursome," Captain Kirby said. "You've captured Dr. Emil Barstow, a very dangerous mad scientist. A job well done."

Steven

Bland

Freedom's Foursome #2 - "Fate is a Cruel Mistress"

"Are there any other situations that require our attention, Capt. Kirby?" Coldfire asked.

"Not that I know of," Captain Kirby said. "Why?"

"I've got a date tonight," Coldfire answered. "And I don't wanna be late."

"Okay," the SWAT captain said. "Get going."

"Thanks. See ya," Coldfire said as he burst into ice flame and flew off.

Soon, Coldfire arrived at an event hall in downtown Manhattan and alighted in an alley near it. The superhero quickly changed into his civilian clothes. Once his change was complete, Danny Ramirez emerged from the alley and entered the building.

"Am I late?" Danny asked.

"No. You're just in time," the host responded. "In fact, you're up next. Get going."

Danny complied and headed for the stage.

"All right, ladies," the auctioneer said. "Our next candidate for our bachelor auction is Daniel "Danny" Ramirez, a fighter pilot. Who will give us an opening bid of two hundred dollars?"

"Two hundred dollars," said one lovely lady, a brunette.

"I have two hundred, thank you, miss," the auctioneer said. "Do I have two hundred fifty?"

"Two hundred fifty," said another lady, a redhead.

"Thank you. Two hundred fifty," the auctioneer said. "Do I hear more?"

Steven

Bland

Freedom's Foursome #2 - "Fate is a Cruel Mistress"

"The bid for Danny Ramirez is two hundred fifty dollars," the auctioneer said. "Two hundred fifty dollars. Going once, going twice - -"

"One thousand," a blond woman said as she made her appearance. She was strikingly beautiful and had an idealized body.

"A very generous offer," the auctioneer said. "Thank you."

"Do I hear more?" He asked.

There was a brief period of quiet.

"Sold to the gorgeous blond lady for one thousand dollars," the auctioneer said as he pounded his gavel.

Danny soon got a good look at the woman who won him and was surprised.

"Victoria?" Danny asked. "Victoria Isley?"

"Yes, Danny, my darling," the gorgeous blond woman answered.

"It's been awhile," Danny said

"It has indeed," Victoria said. "Why don't we talk more - - over dinner, perhaps?"

"I know a great Italian restaurant near here," Danny said. "Best pasta in New York City."

"Sounds great," Victoria said. "Let's go."

Danny and Victoria left the building together.

Once they were outside, Danny tried to hail a cab.

"TAXI," Danny called out.

Steven

Bland

Freedom's Foursome #2 - "Fate is a Cruel Mistress"

Victoria grabbed Danny by the arm and led him into a nearby alley.

"Victoria, what are you doing?" Danny asked. "The taxi could come here at any m- -"

Victoria quickly pulled Danny close to her and gave him a passionate kiss on the lips.

"Mmmmmm," Danny said. Soon, he passed out.

Later, Danny slowly regained consciousness. Then, he found himself chained to a chair inside a castle.

"Coming around, handsome?" A female voice asked. "Good."

"And welcome to my island nation, - - Fate Island," she added.

Danny looked up and saw a woman with an idealized body, standing in front of him. She was wearing a suit of streamlined bronze powered armor, an armored bronze mask which obscured her face, and a long red cape. The streamlined powered armor she wore was molded to the contours of her body,

"Okay, Victoria," Danny said. "You obviously drugged me and brought me here. What's going on?"

The armored woman removed her metallic mask, revealing to Danny that she was, indeed, Victoria.

"Yes, I drugged you - - with a special chemical I mixed in with my lipstick. Then, I took you to my private jet and had my pilot fly us to my castle, where you are now my prisoner. But, how did you know it was me?" Victoria asked.

Steven

Bland

Freedom's Foursome #2 - "Fate is a Cruel Mistress"

"Come off it, Victoria. I've seen you in a bikini when we were at the beach together," Danny answered. "But, tell me, why hide your beautiful face behind that bronze mask?"

"Because, from an early age, due to my gender and my overall attractiveness, I was treated as less than a person," Victoria explained. "In spite of making perfect grades in high school, the guidance counselor recommended that I take an 'easier' school. For that, I secretly poisoned him."

"Eventually, I made the Dean's list at MIT with a 4.0," she added.

"After I graduated college, I was unable to get work as a research scientist," Victoria continued. "Again, I was not taken seriously because of my beauty. So I was left with only one option, the only job where my beauty would become my greatest asset."

"You mean - -?" Danny asked.

"Yes," Victoria answered. "I became a supermodel."

"However, I continued to use my genius to create many sophisticated scientific devices," she added. "*In secret.*"

"How are you the ruler of this island nation?" Danny asked.

"My father was Lord Fate, this island's ruler," Victoria answered. "After he perished, I was next in line to succeed him."

"Knowing that none of the people here would take me seriously because of my beauty," she added. "I chose to *hide* it."

Steven

Bland

Freedom's Foursome #2 - "Fate is a Cruel Mistress"

"To do that, I used my scientific genius to design and create a suit of streamlined bronze powered armor, as well as an armored bronze face mask for myself," she continued.

"Not only did my armored mask hide my beauty," she added. "It also had the added benefit of instilling fear into the hearts of my subjects. And so, clad in my new armor, I became - -"

"- - *LADY FATE*," she exclaimed.

"Tell me something," Danny pleaded. "Why did you shang-hai me and bring me here? Why am I chained up?"

"Because you were the first boy in high school who asked me out," Lady Fate answered. "All the other boys were too scared to do so because of my beauty, but you weren't. You were - - and still are - - so handsome and attractive. I agreed to go out with you. For that time, I thought we had something special together."

"But, once I fell in love with you," she continued. "You dumped me! You were the first person to date me. And you were also the first person to break my heart after I gave it to you! I have never forgotten - - and I will never forgive you for that!"

"And now, you must die," Lady Fate added.

Danny used his ice flames on his chains.

"WHAT?" A stunned Lady Fate exclaimed.

The ice flames froze the chains holding Danny until they became brittle. Then, he snapped them and fled.

Steven

Bland

Freedom's Foursome #2 - "Fate is a Cruel Mistress"

Reaching a secluded place, Danny opened up a pocket dimension to get his Freedom's Foursome uniform. Grabbing the uniform and mask, he quickly put them on.

Once he was in full costume, Coldfire emerged.

"You're not facing a helpless man anymore, Lady Fate," the superhero said.

"You're facing - - COLDFIRE," he added as he shot ice flames at Lady Fate, but they had no effect on her.

"My armor is resistant to fire and cold," Lady Fate said. "You are powerless against me."

"As you are soon about to learn," she said as she used a small weapon which generated high decibel sonic waves which soon brought Coldfire to his knees.

"AARRRGGGHHH," the superhero exclaimed. "MY EARS!"

Forzon, I need help. I'm trapped in a castle that's located in an island nation called Fate Island, Coldfire communicated telepathically. By a woman in an armored suit named Lady Fate.

One minute, I was about to go out on a date with a gorgeous blond woman named Victoria Isley and she kissed me on the lips. Then, for some reason, I passed out, he added. When I came to, I found myself here, captured by Lady Fate, who turned out to be Victoria herself.

Activate your costume's homing beacon, Forzon communicated telepathically. It will show your teammates where your current coordinates are.

I-I'll try, Coldfire communicated telepathically. The superhero struggled to activate the costume's homing beacon, which was located in his belt buckle, but he managed to succeed in his task.

Steven

Bland

Freedom's Foursome #2 - "Fate is a Cruel Mistress"

Instantaneously, Galvanex, Incredibelle, and Fulgurite appeared. Fulgurite blasted the small sonic wave generator with an electrical blast, saving Coldfire in the process.

"Thanks, Fulgurite," Coldfire said.

"No problem," Fulgurite said. "And this must be this 'Lady Fate' you're talkin' about?"

"Yeah," Coldfire answered. "But my powers have no effect on her armor. It's fire and cold resistant."

"Let's see if it's *punch resistant*," Fulgurite said as he threw a powerful punch at the ruler of Fate Island. However, Lady Fate's armor surrounded her with a powerful force field, which deflected the blow.

"How Revoltin'," Fulgurite griped.

"Let's see if *I* can make a dent in that force field," Incredibelle said as she increased her personal density. Then, she delivered a few powerful punches of her own, but the armor's powerful force field deflected them as well.

"My super-strong blows didn't do anything either," Incredibelle said.

"Maybe if we hit her altogether," Fulgurite said. Soon, he and Incredibelle both tried to hit Lady Fate with everything they got, at the same time. Still, their blows had no effect.

"You two each gave me your best shots," Lady Fate said.

"Now, it's *my turn*," she added as she fired concussive blasts at Fulgurite and Incredibelle, knocking them down.

Steven

Bland

Freedom's Foursome #2 - "Fate is a Cruel Mistress"

"UNNNHHHH," the two superheroes exclaimed.

Lady Fate's armor is impressive, Galvanex thought. Let's see if I can take it over and control it.

Galvanex covered the female ruler's bronze clad body, with the intention of carrying out his plan.

However, Lady Fate's armor generated an electrical field which shocked the hero off of her, knocking him down as well.

The ruler of Fate Island pressed a button on her left gauntlet which summoned an army of robot guards who arrived as the four heroes soon recovered. Soon, Freedom's Foursome found themselves surrounded by the powerful automatons.

"GUARDS," Lady Fate commanded. "DISPOSE OF THESE TROUBLEMAKERS - - AT ONCE!"

"As you command," the robot guards said in unison.

"Galvanex, I hate to say it," Coldfire said. "But, we're in *serious trouble*."

"Maybe not," Galvanex said as he wrapped his liquid metal form around Coldfire's body and transformed himself into a suit of powered armor.

The robot guards fired deadly beams at Coldfire, who was protected by Galvanex's body, and Fulgurite who was protected by the electrical force field his body had generated around him.

"There. Now, you should be on equal footing with Lady Fate," Galvanex said.

Steven

Bland

Freedom's Foursome #2 - "Fate is a Cruel Mistress"

"Incredibelle, can your intangible form disrupt the electronics in Fate's robot guards?"

Galvanex asked his female teammate.

"I think it can," Incredibelle answered. "But I'll soon find out."

"Good," Galvanex said.

Incredibelle quickly got to work phasing through all of Lady Fate's robot guards, shorting them out completely.

"NO," Lady Fate exclaimed. "MY ROBOT GUARDS!"

The ruler of Fate Island soon turned her full attention to the four superheroes.

"YOU'LL *PAY* FOR THIS," she exclaimed.

"Uh oh," Coldfire said. "Looks like she's really cheesed off!"

"Don't worry, guys. I'll provide you with the extra support you need," Fulgurite told Galvanex and Coldfire..

"Think you're tough? Take me on," the Galvanex-Coldfire fusion said.

"I will," Lady Fate said.

"But only *I* will be triumphant," she added as she fired concussive blasts from her gauntlets.

"We'll see about that," Coldfire said as he and Galvanex used their shields to block the blasts.

The Galvanex-armored Coldfire charged toward Lady Fate and grappled with her.

Lady Fate managed to throw the armored Coldfire away from her. He landed only a few feet away.

Steven

Bland

Freedom's Foursome #2 - "Fate is a Cruel Mistress"

"Awright," Fulgurite said.

"LET'S FINISH THE JOB," he added as he supercharged the Galvanex-Coldfire fusion, who then discharged a powerful energy blast that damaged Lady Fate's armor.

"NO," Lady Fate exclaimed as she looked at herself and her damaged armor..

"It's over, Victoria," Coldfire said as Galvanex separated from him. "I've just beaten you with a little help from my teammates, Galvanex and Fulgurite. And my other teammate, Incredibelle put all of your robot guards out of commission."

"Now, we're taking you back to the states where you can face jail time for charges of kidnapping and attempted murder," Coldfire added.

"No," Lady Fate said. "As ruler of Fate Island, I have diplomatic immunity."

"Yeah, but you and your robot guards are defeated, Coldfire said. "Are you going to let me go? Or will my friends and I have to tear down your entire castle?"

"Very well, you may all go," Lady Fate said. "But, this isn't over!"

Soon, all four of Freedom's Foursome left the castle.

Once all four were outside, the superheroes made telepathic contact with their mentor.

Forzon, we're ready to teleport to you, Galvanex thought. *All four* of us.

Soon, they were all teleported to Forzon's headquarters.

Angela turned toward Danny.

"You were about to go on a date with Lady Fate?" Angela asked Danny.

Steven

Bland

Freedom's Foursome #2 - "Fate is a Cruel Mistress"

"Yeah," Danny answered. "I also dated Victoria while we were in high school. I was her first boyfriend, for a short time."

"What happened?" Angela asked.

"She wanted a commitment, but I wasn't ready for one," Danny answered. "I didn't want to be tied down, so I broke up with her."

"Before Victoria kidnapped you and revealed that she was a dictator of her own island, would you have considered pursuing a monogamous relationship, perhaps even, marriage, with her?"

"Yes," Danny answered. "But now, that can *never* be."

"While she's still beautiful on the *outside*," Danny continued. "She's *anything but* on the *inside*."

THE END

- 13 -

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