

BADELL • REBOTTARO • BENDER

FIRST THINGS FIRST

This issue is one of the three that can be played in any order following Issue #2. If this issue is the first one you're playing after Issue #2, you can skip to Issue Background below. However, if it's the second or third of the #3/4/5 issues that you're playing, use the following information to connect the stories.

IF PLAYING THIS ISSUE AFTER TOME OF THE BIZARRE #86

The heroes have just dealt with Miss Information and learned the truth of the false Tomb of Anubis. They know that Miss Information was hired by someone to hinder the Freedom Five, but they do not know the identity of that someone. They have also met the new hero Anubis. On their urging, he traveled to Megalopolis to work with Argent Adept and Visionary.

IF PLAYING THIS ISSUE AFTER JUSTICE COMICS #740

The heroes have just dealt with Fanatic and Proletariat, and they have a strong feeling that there is some greater villain behind all of this. If the heroes got through to her, Fanatic returned to Megalopolis to help with the defense of the city and the Akash'Flora tree.

KIF PLAYING THIS AFTER BOTH

If the heroes have succeeded in the previous issues, have gathered lots of information, and are actively attempting to figure out who is behind this, they should be able to figure out that Baron Blade is the ultimate foe by the end of this issue. However, if they have been barely succeeding, or are not working towards solving the mystery, they will likely go into the final issue still unaware.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Visionary has sent the heroes to the island Insula Primalis. The Freedom Jet can carry the entire party, although some (presumably fliers) might want to travel separately.

Insula Primalis

A large island in the Arctic Circle, heated by an active volcano and populated by prehistoric fauna and flora, Insula Primalis is the site of many confrontations in the Sentinel Comics. It is the former home of the Citizens of the Sun—Citizen Dawn and her super-powered followers left their base there long ago. Since OblivAeon, the island has been more dangerous than ever, with trees coming to life, and the land itself shifting. Though the source of these changes is currently unknown...

Aside from Insula Primalis itself being inherently dangerous, it has been used as a base of operations by various supervillains over the years, most recently Baron Blade—his temporary usage of the island after the departure of the Citizens of the Sun left its mark with automated defenses and uncontrolled experiments. However, since his death at the hands of OblivAeon, the remnants of his work there have been overrun.

ISSUE STRUCTURE

This issue has both action scenes and social scenes. In the first scene, the heroes need to penetrate leftover Blade defenses, and also save the hero Tempest.

In Scene 2, the heroes encounter Haka... but not the Haka they know. This Haka is a woman from a different timeline—a timeline in which Tempest was a villain! The heroes must make Haka consider them allies rather than foes. This may or may not involve a round or two of combat with Haka, who's itching for a fight.

The final scene is a brawl against the tree spirits, but with a twist! Once the spirits are quieted—perhaps with the use of the VoidHeart sliver from Issue #2—Tempest tells the Freedom Five about G.L.O.B.A.L. Rather than rejoining the Prime Wardens, the alien ambassador will be working with the UN peacekeeping team. Haka, however, wants to go meet this world's Argent Adept and see how she can help.

But before we can get into all that, it's time to meet the land of dinosaurs and dangers, as it is the environment for this entire issue!

ENVIRONMENT: INSULA PRIMALIS

The proverbial land that time forgot, Insula Primalis would be a tropical paradise... if it weren't trying to kill you. Dinosaurs roam the land, aggressive and venomous plants lurk beneath the palm canopy, and active volcanism threatens to rend apart the ground beneath your feet. And on top of all of that, the island is experiencing an evolution of it own...

FEATURES OF INSULA PRIMALIS

Scenes on Insula Primalis take place in a thematic location:

- The beach, pristine and idyllic
- The lagoon, calm but deadly
- The forest, deep and dark
- The long abandoned airstrip, mostly overgrown
- The slopes of the volcano, high amongst the clouds
- The high meadows, strewn with volcanic rubble
- The marshes, home of the sauropods

Or, as the GM, feel free to create your own!



GREEN

Minor Twists

Pterodactyl Thief: Roll the environment's dice pool. Add a Pterodactyl minion of the Max die size. Its only action is to Hinder, stealing the most obvious equipment in use by a hero.

Primordial Plant Life: Toxic plants come to life around the heroes! Roll the environment's dice pool. Hinder all heroes with the Max die. The penalty can be removed from all nearby heroes with one Overcome success.

Major Twist

Obsidian Field: The ground is dangerously sharp! Roll the environment's dice pool. Until the environment's next turn, Boost all Attack actions with the Mid die and Hinder all Overcome actions with the Min die.

YELLOW

Minor Twists

Stegosaurus Stampede: A herd of dinosaurs larger than elephants charges through the brush, heading right at the heroes! Roll the environment's dice pool. Attack all heroes with the Max die. Until the environment's next turn, Hinder all heroes with the Min die.

Venomous Spores: Nearby prehistoric plantlife emits hallucinogenic neurotoxins. Roll the environment's dice pool. Until the environment's next turn, Hinder all heroes with the Max die.

Major Twist

Rivers of Lava: A fiery flow of lava runs through this area, spitting molten rock in every direction. Roll the environment's dice pool. Attack all targets with the Max die. Until the environment's next turn, Hinder all targets with the Mid die.

Red

Minor Twist

Enraged T-Rex: Roll the environment's dice pool. Create a **O** T-Rex lieutenant. The T-Rex attacks the biggest or tastiest target they can see, other than themselves.

Major Twist

Major Volcanic Eruption: Immediately and on each turn the environment takes in the action order, roll the environment's dice pool and Attack all targets using the Max die. The eruption's effects persist and can only be removed by a multipart challenge:

Divert the pyroclastic flow: OvercomeCool the lava: Overcome

RUNNING THE SCENE: LOCATIONS, TIME, AND PANELS

Something that's almost universal to comics is that action scenes play fast and loose with time and position. You can do that too!

On page I there is a list of a bunch of locations around the island. Maybe a fight starts in the forest, but on Absolute Zero's turn, his player describes punching a dinosaur minion through the forest and into the lagoon, and the fight moves to that locale. Then the scene shifts to the long abandoned airstrip, as Tachyon leads a pack of Utahraptors on a merry chase across the crumbling and overgrown runway. It's all a matter of how each player narrates their hero's action in their panel. Use this terrific environment to its fullest potential!

Once the fight is over, the heroes regroup wherever makes sense for them to do so—don't make them worry about Overcome actions to find one another; they're all in contact with earpiece radios.



INSULA PRIMALIS THREATS

Whenever Insula Primalis takes a turn in the action order, if it has no threats, it can introduce a new one. If it has one or more threats, all of them (including any minions and lieutenants from the environment) act on that turn.

UTAHRAPTOR PACK MINIONS (1 PER HERO)

DESCRIPTION

A pack of Utahraptors, seven foot tall bipedal dinosaurs with vicious teeth and claws, begins hunting the heroes.

ABILITY

Pack Tactics: Utahraptor minions have +1 to Attack for each other Utahraptor in play.

TACTICS

Utahraptors like to team up on a single target, preferably one that appears isolated. If they're ever outnumbered, they will resort to hit-and-run tactics in the jungle.

RAVENOUS DIMETRODON

DESCRIPTION

These giant sail-backed quadrupedal creatures actually predate dinosaurs significantly. They are ten feet long and known for eating sharks. But, right now, this one seems more interested in eating you!

ABILITY

Giant Teeth: Dimetrodons have +1 to Attack.

TACTICS

Dimetrodons hunt the weak. They can be distracted from a hero if presented with an easier target—such as a wounded dinosaur. One way or another, it needs to eat. If it doesn't find an easy meal, it's going to attempt to eat one of the heroes.

CHARGING TRICERATOPS

DESCRIPTION

It's big, it's tough as nails, it's thoroughly aggravated, and it's charging right at you!

ABILITY

CHARGE!: +1 to Attack actions with a running start.

TACTICS

The Triceratops has no tactics. It charges at whatever it sees. Look out!

old automated defenses

DESCRIPTION

This automated SAM installation is Blade-tech leftover from a time Baron Blade occupied the island years ago. The missile-launcher is somehow still active and ready to engage any flying targets.

Due to its state of disrepair, whenever it fires, it also creates a disruptive shockwave around the installation, which may be the reason it hasn't been fully destroyed by the local animal and plant life yet.

ACTION

Roll the environment's dice pool. Attack all flying targets with the Max die (including Pterodactyls, if any). Hinder all heroes near the missile launcher with the Mid die.

RESOLUTION

OUTCOME

Once the missile defenses have been disabled, don't bring them back again. There was just one set of automated defenses left on the island, and the heroes just took it out. Other threats can be introduced multiple times, but not the missile defenses.

If the heroes investigate the defenses, it is immediately apparent that they are the work of Baron Blade, but not any time recently. Don't tell the heroes, but this is unlike the spider robots from Issue #1 or the threats from Tome of the Bizarre #86t—those are recently created and with a lot of work put towards obfuscation.

TAR PIT

DESCRIPTION

Crude bitumen has seeped to the surface here into a vast, wide pool of sticky black tar. Anything that steps in this could be stuck forever, as evidenced by the few emaciated prehistoric creatures mostly submerged in the pit. While near a tar pit, heroes have to be extra careful to not step or fall into the tar.

ACTION

Heroes have a -2 penalty on all actions near the tar pit.

Additionally, if a hero rolls double ones, they fall into the tar pit! Roll the environment's dice pool. Hinder that hero with the Mid+Max dice. This penalty persists until Overcome by another hero.

RESOLUTION

The heroes can choose to intentionally move the fight away from the tar pit, making it a non-issue. However, it's still there, waiting for them, in case they ever go back to this part of the island.

Put the missile battery out of commission: Overcome

CLUTCH OF DINOSAUR EGGS

DESCRIPTION

Upon stepping through a jungle thicket, the heroes have to stop short to keep from treading on a nest of very large yellow and green speckled eggs. These are probably easy enough to avoid, so long as you don't disturb them, or the parent isn't nearby. You might want to take one or two for study, but that's a pretty risky move...

ACTION

Let a hero make an Overcome action to sneak around the eggs. If they choose not to or they fail, add a dinosaur threat from page 3 to the scene.

Additionally, if a hero messes with the eggs in any way, including taking one, add a dinosaur threat from page 3 to the scene.

RESOLUTION

Get away from the eggs safely and quietly: Overcome

OUTCOME

Any hero holding a dinosaur egg will be a prime target for dinosaur minions and lieutenants as long as they are on the island.

BENEDS



THE SITUATION

The heroes approach Insula Primalis in the Freedom Jet or by superpowered flight, or likely a combination of both. Ask the heroes where they want to land—the beach, a high meadow, or the abandoned airstrip are obvious choices. If the heroes opt to spend time flying over the island, feel free to add the Old Automated Defenses threat from page 3 to get them to land quickly.

Meanwhile, in a forest clearing a half-mile inland from the lagoon, an injured Tempest is currently engaged in mortal combat with a cybernetic allosaurus, and is in serious trouble. The heroes must reach the meadow and defeat the robotically-enhanced dinosaur before they can interact with Tempest.



THE OPPOSITION

This is a fight against the environment. Also add this foe:

CYBERNETIC ALLOSAURUS 1 & LIEUTENANT

DESCRIPTION

This I2-foot-tall, robot-dinosaur is a terrifying experiment abandoned by Baron Blade at some point in the past. It's clearly getting the best of Tempest! (Look to the cover of this issue for inspiration.)

Tempest is barely conscious and is that bad boy's main target. The alien hero is in trouble unless the heroes can occupy the attention of the cybernetic Allosaurus.

ABILITY

Chomp Tempest: Roll its die. If it rolls at least a 4 (on whatever size its die currently is), advance the scene tracker by I. If it rolls at least a 7, advance the tracker by 2 instead.

TACTICS

If a hero near the Allosaurus hits it, it will turn from Tempest and spend its turn attacking/chasing that hero. However, if none do, the Allosaurus on its turn will use its ability on Tempest instead.

TEMPEST

When the few remaining Maerynians fled their planet in the face of Grand Warlord Voss's attack, M'kk Dall'ton led them safely to the planet we call Earth. The Maerynians have now established their own island on this planet and mostly keep to themselves there, but M'kk Dall'ton still works with the heroes of Earth to protect the planet under the name Tempest. Tempest is able to control the weather and attack with lightning, but the alien is also an accomplished ambassador and is always eager to find nonviolent solutions to problems, where able.

SGENE(

RESOLUTION

If the heroes defeat the cybernetic Allosaurus, deal with all other threats the environment brings to bear, and manage to keep Tempest alive, all before the scene tracker runs out, they've successfully completed the challenge! If the Maerynian hero took too much damage, it's fairly straightforward to revive Tempest, at which point the alien ambassador opens up to the heroes about what's going on here.

IF THE HEROES FAIL

If the heroes don't succeed before the scene tracker runs out, a large pack of Utahraptors appears and drags Tempest off, deep into the heart of the jungle. Looks like the heroes will need to mount a rescue mission!

Using the environment threats and twists as challenges, you can run this as in-depth as you want. You could make the heroes fight their way through multiple locations, always a few steps behind the raptors and their captured prey. Or perhaps the heroes quickly overtake the

raptors and beat them up, but Tempest is in critical condition and must be stabilized. Regardless, Scene I ending in failure doesn't ruin the whole story—just keep going, after a bit of storytelling concerning the consequences of failure. The heroes need to feel like there is a negative outcome as a result of their actions or inactions.

TEMPEST'S TALE

Tempest is very glad the Freedom Five showed up when they did. Turns out, Maerynians like getting chomped by giant half-robot half-dinosaurs as much as any human does. Which is to say, not at all.

Insula Primalis has been exhibiting strange behavior in the last few months. Stranger than the usual "island heated by an active volcano and covered in dinosaurs", that is. Tempest recently arrived on the island to investigate these new developments as part of the United Nation's response to superhuman activity around the world. Fears that this might be linked to something left over from the Citizens of the Sun turned out to be unfounded, but the troubles here are still significant.

As Tempest starts explaining that the trees themselves are coming to life and the land seems to be in turmoil, the heroes spot movement in the tree line. A towering, muscular Maori woman in non-traditional garb steps out of cover."Stop where you are!You defend this evil-doer?" she accuses, pointing angrily at Tempest. "Then you must be villains as well! Prepare for battle!" With a roar, she charges forward.



THE SITUATION

The reality-rending events of OblivAeon impacted many people, but few more profoundly than Haka. The Haka originally from this timeline was lost in the Multiverse, switching places with another timeline's Haka—the woman threatening to trounce the heroes right now. But she doesn't know who are her friends and who are her foes in this strange new reality.

What's going on here? In this Haka's original timeline, Tempest was a villain who Haka fought on more than one occasion. She isn't sure about the Freedom Five's allegiance in this world, but she knows that Tempest is too great a threat to let slip away. She's ready to throw down right now to finish the alien off. Presumably she'll have to go through the heroes first, though.

THE HEROES KNOWN AS HAKA

In this timeline, there was a mountain of a man named Aata Wakawarewa. He lived for hundreds of years, only relatively recently taking the hero name Haka. He was a proud and powerful Maori warrior, and though his tribe exiled him centuries ago, he still fought as a protector of all people in all lands as he walked the Earth.

Then, during the OblivAeon conflict, he ended up stranded in another reality. Simultaneously, the only other Haka in the entire Multiverse found herself in this reality. When the doors slammed closed across all spacetimes, Arataki Wakawarewa was the only Haka in this reality, and Aata was gone from this realm. Arataki has a similar backstory to Aata, though some heroes in this reality were villains in her reality, and vice versa.

Now, this Haka could be a valuable ally and is certainly eager to return to heroism, but she must be stopped before she trounces Tempest!

THE OPPOSITION

Haka stands against the heroes, and she'll fight if they can't convince her not to. The brutality of the Insula Primalis environment doesn't let up during this encounter, of course. Haka has limited patience, and if her patience runs out she attacks the heroes.

НАКА

DESCRIPTION

Convincing Haka to stand down is a multipart challenge, with the stages listed in the Resolution section below in the order they must be completed. If Haka loses patience with them, use the Action portion of this challenge. The heroes may attempt to convince Haka of their, and Tempest's, good will in whatever way they can think of.

ACTION

Haka Loses Patience

Roll the environment's dice pool. Hinder the heroes with the Mid die until Haka's next turn.

Mark a box of Haka's patience

RESOLUTION

- Convince Haka to listen to the heroes: Overcome
- Convince Haka that none of the PCs are villains: Overcome
- Convince Haka that Tempest is not a villain: Overcome

OUTCOME

If the heroes manage to complete the three Resolution Overcomes before all of the Haka's patience boxes have been checked, proceed to Haka's Tale on the next page. Otherwise, continue with the "If the Heroes Fail" section.

HAKA'S TALE

If the heroes manage to get through to Haka, she introduces herself as Arataki and, after some prodding and encouragement, tells her story of being a hero in her world. Her humble beginning as a Maori Moa-hunter, her proud leadership of her tribe, and her exile after returning to life mere hours after what was thought to be a fatal wound.

Besides her great physical might and combat prowess, Arataki was apparently able to heal from any wound, no matter how great. And she wasn't aging, either. This led to her walking the Earth for centuries, protecting those in need and fighting against whoever would harm and oppress the less fortunate.

Eventually, she fully embraced the role of hero, fighting alongside the Freedom Four in her world before leaving them to form the Primal Wardens with her friend the Argent Artist. Together with other heroes that are both familiar to the Freedom Five and at the same time very different, this Haka went into battle against numerous villains, including the vicious Plague Beast, the terrible Ultratron, and the commanding Citizen Storm.

Citizen Storm was the M'kk Dall'ton of her timeline, who came to Earth to oppress and destroy, building a terrible army of superpowered villains here. Haka is glad to learn that this world is different, but is eager to find her place in this world. If any hero mentions what's going on with Argent Adept, she gets excited. Anthony Drake in her world is the Argent Artist and her good friend. She knows this Drake will be a different man, especially after some initial confusion about "Argent Adept" vs. "Argent Artist", but she is still eager to see a friendly face.

However, before the heroes can tell her more, they are interrupted by some furious foliage...

IF THE HEROES FAIL...

If the heroes fail to convince her before she loses patience, Haka crouches, slaps her thighs, shouts "Ka mate! Ka mate!" then attacks the heroes. Once she actually starts fighting, any Attack the heroes land on her that deals damage Hinders the next hero to attempt to convince Haka of anything using that Attack's Min die.

If the heroes fail to convince her before the scene tracker runs out of boxes, Haka lands a punch that knocks Tempest silly—doing long term damage to Tempest's willingness to aid Earth in its battles against villains, and likely ruining any chance Tempest will ever trust Haka. Additionally, the heroes will probably not hear Haka's tale, will not have her help against the foes in Scene 3, and won't secure her help as part of the new Prime Wardens in the final issue.





THE SITUATION

As the heroes converse, a group of luminous tree spirits emerges from the surrounding jungles and attacks! Tempest and Haka take on two of the largest, leaving the remaining spirits for the player characters.

THE INITIAL OPPOSITION

The enemies are tree spirits plus any threats from the environment. The spirits range from eight to twenty feet tall, and look like ghostly animated trees, with foliage, bark, leaves, and floating roots. These two start the scene:

KAPOK SPIRITS 3 © Lieutenants

DESCRIPTION

These are hulking, 15 foot tall tree-monsters.

ABILITY

Smash Through: Kapok Spirits have +1 to Overcome actions where bulk and size matter.

TACTICS

Right away, two Kapok Spirits engage Haka and Tempest. The remaining one Attacks the closest hero.

MANGROVE SPIRITS MINIONS (1 PER HERO)

DESCRIPTION

These spirits reach out with their massive root systems, attempting to wrap up their foes.

ABILITY

Massive Roots: Mangrove Spirits have +2 to Hinder actions that entangle targets.

TACTICS

The Mangrove Spirits cannot make Attack actions, so they focus on Hindering as many heroes as possible.

ANOTHER WAVE OF SPIRITS

At the start of the second round of the action order, these spirits also join the fray!



DESCRIPTION

These tall, slender tree spirits look like coconut palms and attack by hurling coconuts with their frond-like limbs.

ABILITY

Uninterrupted Toss: Palm Spirits have +1 to Attack actions as long as there are no heroes within melee range of them.

TACTICS

Due to their bonus at ranged attacks, the Palm Spirits always try to flee from combat. However, once they're out of the reach of the heroes, they circle back around to fling coconuts at whatever hero they can see.

JASMINE SPIRITS MINIONS (1 PER HERO)

DESCRIPTION

Don't let the fragrant white flowers fool you; these spirits will pummel their targets into pulp.

ABILITY

Swarm Tactics: Jasmine Spirits have + I to Attack actions if Attacking the same target that at least one other Jasmine Spirit Attacked this round.

TACTICS

The Jasmine Spirits swarm the hero that they think poses the biggest threat (or the hero holding the VoidHeart Sliver, as detailed on page 10). They gang up on that hero and try to incapacitate them.





THE VOIDHEART SLIVER

If the heroes have the VoidHeart Sliver, the hero who is carrying it feels a pull from the Sliver when the tree spirits appear. Over the course of the fight, whichever hero holds the Sliver should feel continually pulled towards the center of the island, and the attacking spirits should be more drawn to that hero than any of the others.

If they follow the pull of the Sliver, it leads them to a peaceful clearing in the center of Insula Primalis. When the hero carrying the Sliver enters the clearing, the tree spirits stop fighting that hero. Any heroes outside the clearing will still be attacked by spirits, but heroes in the clearing are safe. If there are no heroes to fight, the tree spirits stand in a ring around the clearing, watching.

Once in the clearing, the Sliver attempts to pull away from the hero. The Sliver clearly wants to drive itself into the ground, but the heroes can choose to not let it. If the heroes keep the Sliver, they will have to fight their way out of the clearing. If they take this course of action, don't go easy on them. Feel free to introduce environment threats, but it is still possible that the heroes will defeat the tree spirits. If they do, move on to the resolution.

If the heroes do allow the Sliver to plant itself in the island, the spirits all plant themselves and revert to trees.

RESOLUTION

If the heroes destroy the tree spirits, skip to "Epilogue".

However, if the heroes planted the Sliver in the center of the island, Tempest and Haka meet them in the clearing as they do so. They all see a bright flash from deep in the jungle. If they go towards the light, they find a huge glowing tree surrounded by translucent wispy spirits. These spirits all of different sizes and types show no aggression, but speak out as a unified voice, thanking the heroes. They tell the heroes that this island is becoming a new Nexus of the Void, and that the heroes have helped this land become what it needs to be. The spirits will help heal the Akash'Flora tree in Megalopolis. (If the heroes haven't talked to Haka about Argent Adept yet, now is a good time to do so. The trees bring up Argent Adept if the heroes do not.)

THE NEXUS OF THE VOID

During the OblivAeon event, the former Nexus of the Void was destroyed entirely by OblivAeon. The Nexus was an important part of magical nature—the connecting point of the physical plane and the Void. The VoidHeart in Issue #2 was attempting to create a new Nexus of the Void, and it had centered on the roiling energy in Ravenwood. That would have been a dangerous place for the Void to intersect with our world. However, Insula Primalis is a much more contained place. With the creation of this new Nexus of the Void, the heroes have made a great stride towards putting their world back together.

As the heroes make their way back to the Freedom Jet, they see spirit wisps busy dissolving the remaining technology on the island, and the land beneath their feet occasionally changes from grass to snow to sand to stone and back.

EPILOGUE

Tempest appreciates the help of the heroes, but needs to return to the G.L.O.B.A.L. Headquarters. Wait, what is G.L.O.B.A.L.? It's Tempest's new U.N.-backed team, the Geocentric Limited Operations for the Benefit of Advanced Lifeforms. And their headquarters is actually a space-station in orbit around Earth! Tempest has a small spacecraft and is eager to get back, but is willing to drop Haka off at Megalopolis on the way.

If this is the last issue the heroes play of the #3/4/5 issues, the Freedom Five can opt to take Haka back to Megalopolis with them instead. But, either way, Haka is eager to get to meet up with Argent Adept ASAP.

Now, the heroes are either off to one of the other missions that Visionary gave them, or they're about to return to Megalopolis.



THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

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