

Chapter 1: Disasters, Heroes, and Idiots

Paul, dressed in his black ninja outfit, could hear the sirens coming as he flew toward the bridge and his heart raced. People were likely dying. He had little details on the disaster, but once he caught sight of it, the problem was obvious. A support pier on a bridge had broken. The bridge had cracked and was collapsing, and cars were falling into the cold river below.

As he flew up under the bridge and pushed up, making the crack close so cars would stay on, he saw two people running up. They both wore shoulder capes with hoods that showed nothing but their eyes, so no one knew who they were. The boy had a black hood with flames on it, and the girl a blue hood with white bubbles.

She jumped off the bridge into the freezing cold water below to save the people in the river while the boy began heating up the metal around the crack to weld it together. “Go!” he called to Paul. “I have this. You need to help save the people.”

Paul immediately flew off. The girl in the blue hood was pulling people from under the water at incredible speeds and putting them on shore. A team of medics was waiting there to help them.

As she saved the people in the water, Paul started catching the cars that were falling and flying them back up to the bridge.

When Paul returned one of the cars, he saw police surrounding the black-hooded boy.

“Stop!” one of the policemen called. “Who are you?”

The boy did not stop. Instead, he set himself and a five foot radius around him on fire, and he continued to weld the bridge.

The police tried to get to him, but they could not get through the fire.

“Help the people!” the hooded boy called. When the crack was stable enough, he looked around to see what to do next. A team of engineers was trying to fix the broken pier, but they could do too little too late. The boy grabbed one of the ropes they were using and jumped down to where the team was harnessed.

“Move!” he ordered the repair men. “This bridge will collapse soon. Let me do this.”

The foreman of the team started to argue with him, but the boy put his hands on the metal pier and started heating it up.

A crew of reporters came on the scene and soon there were cameras everywhere.

A reporter stood by the first aid team who was helping those the blue hooded girl was bringing up from the water. “Olivia Ross reporting from the small town of Cadina,” she began. “I’m on scene of a disaster. Something struck the support pier of the Bolyai Bridge, almost causing the bridge to collapse. Fortunately, our Noble Ninja is on the scene, and once again he is being aided by Inferno and Flux.”

The screen split, showing a picture of the heroes. Paul was coming out of the water, pulling a car out with him. Over him, the words “Noble Ninja” were superimposed. The boy in the black hood was shown holding ends of a broken cable, pulling them together, and fusing them. The word “Inferno” was superimposed over his picture. The third part of the screen showed the girl in the blue hood jumping out of the water like a dolphin with a person in each hand. She landed on the land and laid the people down. “Flux” was superimposed over her picture.

The medics immediately went to work. One of the men who the girl rescued was not breathing. They tried mouth to mouth. They tried to push the water from his lungs. Next, they started grabbing equipment to put into the lungs to drain them.

“He’ll never make it,” one of the medics noted, shaking his head.

“Move over!” Flux ordered.

“Why should I...” the medic began.

He didn’t get to finish. She pushed him away, knelt beside the man, put her hands above his chest, and started meditating.

Soon the water flowed from his lungs, out his mouth and to her hands.

She moved her hands over him. The medics couldn’t tell what she was doing, but water appeared to flow around the man.

In less than a minute, the man was not only breathing, he was sitting up, thanking Flux.

She didn't say anything back, but jumped into the water to see if anyone else needed help.

Olivia stepped up to one of the medics and asked, "What just happened? It appears our super-hero Flux just saved that man's life."

"Likely," the medic admitted as he watched the other medics looking over the man. They were stunned at how well he was healed.

They all turned their attention to the water again. Flux was nowhere to be seen.

Olivia turned her attention to the bridge, where the situation seemed stable.

Once again, the police surrounded Inferno.

"Who are you, boy?" an officer demanded. "We need to know who you are. Come with us. Put your hands behind your back."

Inferno did as told. He put his hands behind his back while the police cuffed him.

Almost immediately after they did, another cable snapped.

Inferno melted the handcuffs that were on him. "Stand back!" he called to the police. He lit himself up on fire and used the force of jet propulsion to blast himself to the broken cable.

As he grabbed the ends of the cable, pulled them together, and welded them with his bare hands, the police looked at the bridge. There was a hole where Inferno blasted off from.

"Who is that boy?" a police asked.

Paul walked up to the police, and asked, “Is there a problem?”

“Who are the heroes in the hoods?” they demanded. “Tell us.”

“I suggest you ask them,” Paul responded. “Right now, we have a mess to clean up.”

He looked down at the water.

“Are there more people down there?” the police chief asked. “Flux has been down a long time. Do I need to send a team to rescue her?”

“No,” Paul assured him. “She’ll be fine. Perhaps I should see what is going on.” He dove off the bridge into the water.

He came out sooner than she did and flew over to Inferno. “I need your help,” he whispered. “Flux is bringing up technology. “Don’t ask questions, just destroy it. I’ll explain later.”

“Sure, dad,” Inferno whispered back. “Is the bridge stable? Are the people all off?”

“I think so,” Paul answered. He then dove into the water again. He and Flux pulled up the technology. It appeared to be some sort of missile.

Inferno didn’t ask questions. “Stand back!” he called to everyone.”

“No!” the police chief yelled.

“It’s going to self-destruct and cause a huge explosion!” Paul warned. “Stand back!”

The technology started beeping and shaking. Everyone ran.

Inferno blasted plasma from his hands, hitting the technology and disintegrating it. The people were safe, but the ground below it was burned.

The police chief walked up to Paul. “Who are the hooded heroes?” he demanded to know.

Paul didn’t answer his question, but responded. “I’ll write up my report for AIDD. You can ask your questions to them.”

The police chief nodded. He was very familiar with AIDD, which stood for the Accident, Incident, and Disaster Department of the Piedmont.

Paul didn’t stick around, but flew away.

Inferno and Flux began to walk to where they had their car parked, but they were stopped by Olivia.

“What are your real names?” she asked.

“We wear hoods for a reason,” Inferno responded. “Please, no questions.”

“But the people of the Piedmont want to know about you,” she coaxed. “How about an interview? What powers do you have? Where did they come from?”

“Do you not understand what no questions means?” Inferno asked. “Seriously, leave me alone. I’m in a hurry.”

“What for?” Olivia asked, sticking her mic into his face.

He grabbed the mic and melted it. “No questions,” he insisted. Then he added, “Sorry about the mic.”

A stiff wind blew, and Flux began to shiver. Inferno picked her up. "Let's go," he offered as he carried her off. "I'll take care of you."

Olivia watched them walk off. The people tried to crowd around them as they left, but the air became too hot for anyone to get too close.

Inferno walked off easily with Flux.

He went several blocks to where he had his car hidden behind a store. They got in the car and he drove off.

"I wish the reporters would leave us alone," he complained.

"You could be nicer to them," Flux suggested. "They are curious."

"I know," he agreed, "but I don't want the publicity, and we're in a hurry. We are late for school."

"Aren't you going the wrong way to school?" she asked.

"Yes," he admitted. "We're going home first. I need to get my backpack, and I'm getting breakfast. I am starving. I woke up with dad telling us of the disaster call."

He drove home. Before they got out of the car, they both looked around to see if reporters had followed them. There was no sign of them, and they had both taken off their hoods, so they stepped out of the car.

When they went inside, their father was already there, he had flown to the woods behind their house, taken off his ninja mask and black shirt, and walked into the house. That was generally the way their father returned. He really wondered how people didn't figure him out anyway. After all, he had

bright blue hair, glowing red eyes, retractable wings, and rock-like skin with a gray hue.

When they walked through the door, they were greeted with the scent of freshly baked cinnamon rolls, omelets, and bacon.

“I figured you would be hungry when you returned,” their mother, Ellie, explained. “Sit down and we’ll eat.”

“We need to hurry,” the girl, Aqua, suggested. “We don’t have time for breakfast. We’re late. We should get something and eat in the car.”

Ellie kept her usual smile and assured her, “Don’t worry. AIDD works with the school. They have explained to the principal that you work with them doing calculations for the disaster team, which is why you have to miss school during them. You’ll be fine.”

“Why don’t we just say who we are?” Aqua asked.

“Because I don’t want the publicity,” her brother, Flint, who the reporters called Inferno, replied. “The house would be bombarded with paparazzi.”

“We should still go,” Aqua suggested. “I have a physics test today.”

“Sit,” their father, Paul, instructed.

“Thanks,” Flint responded. “I’m hungry.”

They all sat down at the table.

“I assume that Onyx and Ariel have already gone to school,” Aqua noted, seeing that the plate of bacon was half eaten. Her younger brother Onyx was a big, 6’1”, muscular guy

who always had an appetite. His twin sister, Ariel, was only 4'10", so the two looked odd together, not at all like twins.

Of course, Aqua didn't look like Flint either, and they were twins too. They were both eighteen, but Flint had fiery red hair and red eyes, while Aqua had blue hair and blue eyes.

"Onyx and Ariel would be helpful," Aqua pointed out.

That conversation had been had at least a dozen times, so her dad merely replied, "You know the rules. Fifteen is too young by government standards."

Aqua sighed and picked up a cinnamon roll to eat as her mother served her hot chocolate, knowing how cold she would be after swimming in cold water in October.

As they ate, their father, Paul, explained, "We have trouble. That was not a government missile."

"Is it from another country?" Flint asked.

"No, another planet," Paul answered.

Both Flint and Aqua reacted with shock. They weren't surprised to hear that people on other planets existed. After all, their father was from another planet, which is why he could control fire, fly, swim incredibly well, and was super-strong. It's also why they had their powers. What surprised them was that something came from another planet and almost destroyed the bridge.

"What was it?" Aqua asked.

"A probe," Paul answered. "It is a probe that was sent looking for my people. Apparently, it somehow hit the pier."

Anytime my enemies' technology can be found it self-destructs. They don't want it getting in our hands."

"The probe was looking for your people?" Flint asked.

"Yes," Paul answered. "This is serious. I have told you stories of the Diophants. They are determined to annihilate my entire race, as we are the only people who can stop them."

"It sounds like school is canceled for us today," Flint noted. "What do you need us to do?"

"Nothing," his father answered. "This risk is mine."

Ellie put her hand on his shoulder and asked, "What are you going to do, dear?"

"Leave for a while," he answered. He took a deep breath and explained, "I must protect all of you. I must protect this world too. The probes are attracted to our DNA. I must leave."

"Won't they find us?" Flint asked. "We have your DNA too. All your children do."

"I'm a pure blood," Paul responded. "The probes will follow me. You will be safer with me gone. This is my battle. I must go."

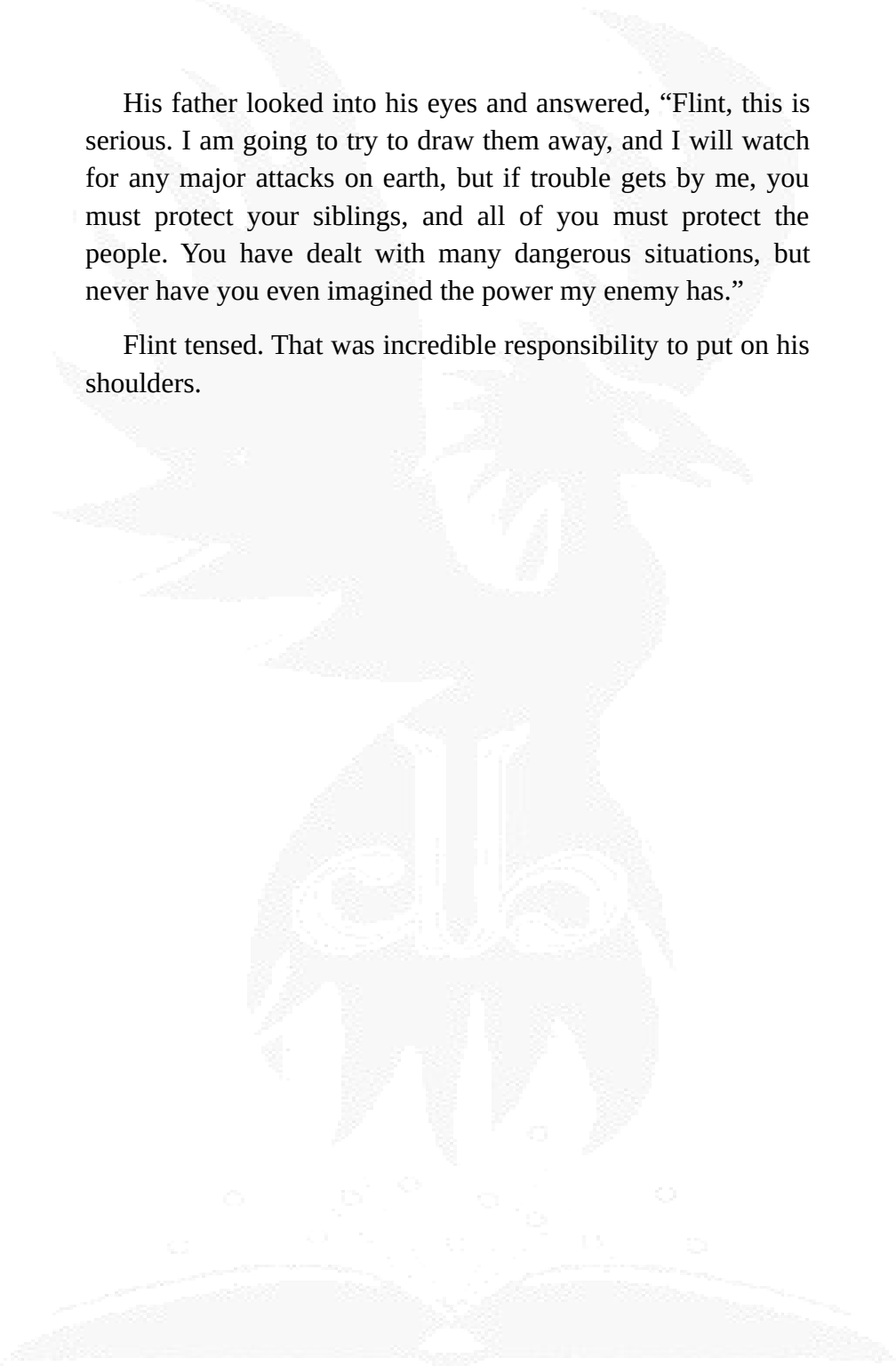
"You can't go alone," Ellie begged. "You'll never survive."

"I'll call for help," Paul assured her. "There are other agents on planets not too far away. We have a base fairly close."

"What if they come here?" Ellie asked.

"You can call me for help and I'll come," he assured her.

Flint put down his fork. "What if the probe already sent information back?"



His father looked into his eyes and answered, “Flint, this is serious. I am going to try to draw them away, and I will watch for any major attacks on earth, but if trouble gets by me, you must protect your siblings, and all of you must protect the people. You have dealt with many dangerous situations, but never have you even imagined the power my enemy has.”

Flint tensed. That was incredible responsibility to put on his shoulders.