

MARVELS SERIAL—CHAPTER THREE

CAPTAIN AMERICA

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BASED ON MARVEL COMICS' GOLDEN-AGE HEROES

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ALL-AMERICAN GIRL
I'd use this one. Namor falling
in love with Betty Dean is . . .
close to the truth. And Namor
did gain his super-powers from
Poseidon.

ALL-AMERICAN GIRL (V.O.)
In a roundabout way.

VILLAIN TWO (V.O.)
Now they're talking about the
girl we wanted to . . . see.

VILLAIN ONE (V.O.)
Oh, her. She would have been a
great prisoner of war.

OTTO
Did Namor and Betty ever fall
in love?

ALL-AMERICAN GIRL
They were at one time. But they
lost touch with each other after
the war. Like so many other people.

OTTO
That's too bad.

He hands her another paper-clipped set of papers. He smirks.

OTTO (CONT'D)
But this will make you smile.
The secret origin of Captain
America.

She reads a few pages. Then she is puzzled.

ALL-AMERICAN GIRL
The shield of Lancelot?

EXT. AN APARTMENT BUILDING - EARLY EVENING

SUPER: NEW YORK CITY, SPRING 1941

AN UNINKED COMIC STRIP

The title is JOE AND JACK. Respectively, they are CARICATURES OF JOE SIMON AND JACK KIRBY, Captain America's creators. They are behind the small FORBUSH MAN. Bullets bounce off of the hero's body, but some slugs almost hit Joe and Jack's heads.

STEVE (V.O.)

(super-hero voice)

Stand behind me, innocent bystanders! I can withstand their bullets!

(now normal voice)

We could stand this better if you would just stand up, Mystery Man!

INT. A BEDROOM - NIGHT

The sickly pre-teen BUCKY lies in his bed. STEVE ROGERS sits at the foot of the bed and shows him the comic strip. Steve is a tall, muscular blond man in his early twenties. Bucky laughs.

BUCKY

The joke's good, but he needs a funnier name.

Bucky then coughs for a long time. Steve is worried.

STEVE

Let me get you some water.

BUCKY

(amid coughs)

Oh . . . kay.

Steve exits. Bucky pulls out some sketches from underneath his bed. He looks at them and beams. Steve returns with a glass of water.

STEVE

Here you go.

Bucky takes the glass and drinks half of the water. Steve sits on the foot of the bed and notices the sketches.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Hey. What's this?

BUCKY

Pictures of my mystery man.
I call him Captain America.

Bucky hands the sketches to Steve. While Steve examines the sketches, Bucky holds the glass to his forehead.

BUCKY (CONT'D)

I based him on you.

STEVE

You did? Why, thank you, Bucky.

STEVE'S POV/THE SKETCHES IN HIS HANDS

The pages are shown one after the other. The illustrations were obviously drawn by a kid. CAPTAIN AMERICA holds his shield on one piece of paper. On another he throws his shield at a CROOK. On the third he uses his shield to deflect bullets.

RESUME BUCKY AND STEVE

BUCKY

I know my artwork isn't as good
as yours, Uncle Steve.

STEVE

I'll teach you some pointers
when you feel better.

Bucky lets out a feeble chuckle as he puts the glass on the floor.

BUCKY

That's nice of you to say.

(sighs)

But we both know I'm not going
to make it.

STEVE

(very alarmed)

Don't even joke about that!

BUCKY

I'm worn out, Uncle Steve. I
can't do it anymore.

STEVE

You're just tired. You'll feel
a lot better when you wake up
in the morning.

A golden light shines down on them. Steve does not notice it.
Bucky looks at the light and beams, albeit in a weak manner.

BUCKY

They're waiting for me, Uncle
Steve. I have to go now.

STEVE

(now very scared)

You're not going anywhere! I'll
call Dr. Black, and he'll give
you a shot, and everything will
be okay!

BUCKY

Good . . . bye.

Bucky closes his eyes and dies. His hand falls down and knocks
over the glass. The water splashes the floor.

STEVE

Bucky?

(now scared)

Bucky! Bucky!

Steve tries to shake Bucky awake. As he does this, the golden
light shines brighter. Steve then sees the light and looks up.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Bucky, come back! Don't leave us!
You can't leave your mother!

BUCKY (V.O.)

I have to, Uncle Steve. My spirit
is crossing over. But not before
I turn you into Captain America.

STEVE

Turn me into . . . him?

BUCKY (V.O.)

I'm using the ectoplasm from the astral plane. I'm shaping it into the things you need. Like your shield.

The star-and-striped shield materializes on Bucky's body.

STEVE

Oh, my God!

BUCKY (V.O.)

And your costume.

The red-white-and-blue costume materializes at Steve's feet.

BUCKY (V.O. CONT'D)

It was all part of my plan.

STEVE

Plan?

BUCKY (V.O.)

I'm a psychic. A medium. I was tapping into the astral plane these past few weeks. So I could reshape the ectoplasm. That's why I got so sick.

STEVE

Oh, Dear Lord!

BUCKY (V.O.)

I don't have much time left. Here's what you need to do.

EXT. A SKYSCRAPER - NIGHT

A large silver bugle is on the roof. Next to the bugle is a sign that reads

THE DAILY BUGLE

A fiery trail flies past the bugle and heads for the camera.

BETTY (V.O.)

It's . . . the Human Torch?

The fiery trail disappears. A few seconds later, the miniature Namor flies past the bugle and heads for the camera.

BETTY (V.O. CONT'D)

And Namor is flying behind him.

EXT. ANOTHER ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Betty looks through a pair of binoculars. She stands next to CAPTAIN AMERICA. Betty lowers her binoculars.

BETTY

Of course. Namor can't be too close to the Torch's flame. It dehydrates him.

CAPTAIN AMERICA

Oh. That makes sense.

BETTY

Be careful. Don't look directly the Torch's light.

They shield their eyes. Then they look up. The sky lights up with a fiery glow.

THEIR POV/HUMAN TORCH

He slowly extinguishes his flame, causing him to descend. Once he touches the ground, his body almost stops blazing. He keeps his left hand on fire to cast some light.

HUMAN TORCH

Hello, Miss Dean. Hello, Captain America.

BETTY, CAPTAIN AMERICA, AND HUMAN TORCH

BETTY

Uh, hello.

CAPTAIN AMERICA

Uh, hi.

BETTY

I didn't expect to see you tonight.

HUMAN TORCH

Namor told the FBI about your friend here. They asked us both to check him out.

NAMOR (V.O.)

Torch!

They all look upward.

THEIR POV

Namor slowly descends. He is now the SUB-MARINER. He wears a green swimsuit with a golden belt and a seashell-shaped buckle. He also has golden armbands. He is very displeased.

SUB-MARINER

For all we know, this "Captain America" may be an enemy agent! Do not reveal vital information about us in front of him!

He lands. Then he approaches the camera.

THE FOUR HEROES

BETTY DEAN

Relax, Namor. I had checked him out. He doesn't have a criminal record.

CAPTAIN AMERICA

(grins with pride)
But I do have this magic shield.

SUB-MARINER

(dryly)
Just how magical is this shield?

BETTY

Allow me to demonstrate,
gentlemen.

Betty aims her gun at Captain America. He raises his shield in a defensive pose. Human Torch steps behind Sub-Mariner.

HUMAN TORCH

Whoa! It's bulletproof?

CAPTAIN AMERICA

Completely.

SUB-MARINER

Let me fire the gun. The bullets
might ricochet and hit you.

BETTY

No deal, Namor.

She fires the gun, and the shield gives off a little spark. She lets out a little laugh. Sub-Mariner is furious.

SUB-MARINER

Betty! You could have killed
yourself!

BETTY

Wrong. Look at his feet.

Sub-Mariner and Human Torch walk two steps and look down. Human Torch gapes while Sub-Mariner arches his eyebrows.

THEIR POV

A bent bullet lies next to Captain America's boot.

BETTY (V.O.)

His shield absorbs the impact
of bullets and projectiles.
They lose their momentum and
just fall to the ground. So
they can't do any harm to
innocent bystanders.

RESUME THE FOUR HEROES

Betty and Captain America grin at the confused Sub-Mariner and Human Torch.

HUMAN TORCH
I don't believe it!

CAPTAIN AMERICA
It's also fireproof.

HUMAN TORCH
You're kidding?

Captain America holds up his shield.

CAPTAIN AMERICA
I'll show you. Try to hit me
with a fireball.

Human Torch is unsure. Betty smirks at him.

BETTY
Go ahead, Jim.

Sub-Mariner gently pushes Human Torch aside.

SUB-MARINER
One moment.

He approaches Betty and picks her up in his arms.

BETTY
Namor! What are you doing?
Put me down!

SUB-MARINER
His shield may deflect the
fireball your way, Betty.
So for your own safety . . .

He flies her out of the scene.

SUB-MARINER (V.O.)
Now you may proceed.

CAPTAIN AMERICA

Go ahead.

Human Torch hurls a fireball at him. The shield deflects it back at Human Torch, who absorbs it into his body. Then he gapes in astonishment.

CAPTAIN AMERICA (CONT'D)

Come on! I barely felt that!

Human Torch frowns. Then he hurls a bigger fireball at Captain America. The shield deflects it back at Human Torch, who again absorbs into his body.

CAPTAIN AMERICA (CONT'D)

Now just try to melt it!

Human Torch emits flames at the shield, but it does not melt. He increases the jet blast. Captain America staggers a bit, but the shield retains its shape.

HUMAN TORCH

What is that shield made of?

CAPTAIN AMERICA

Something out of this world!

THE HOVERING SUB-MARINER AND BETTY

They look down. Betty is concerned.

BETTY

Torch, that's enough! He's barely standing up as it is!

SUB-MARINER

No! Keep it up! Let's see how strong he is!

BETTY

Namor!

SUB-MARINER

You wanted him to demonstrate his powers to me!

Betty sighs and looks down again.

CAPTAIN AMERICA AND HUMAN TORCH

The jet blast finally knocks Captain America on his back.

CAPTAIN AMERICA

OOOOF!

Human Torch stops the jet blast, but he keeps his hand on fire.

HUMAN TORCH

Good Lord, man! Are you all
right?

Captain America holds his shield in one hand. He uses the other
one to do a handstand. Human Torch gapes.

CAPTAIN AMERICA

I'm all right.

As Captain America quickly gets back on his feet, Sub-Mariner
and Betty descend. He sets her down. She points to the side.

BETTY

Namor, fly halfway to the Daily
Bugle building. I want you to
hover between here and there.

SUB-MARINER

Why should I?

BETTY

Because I asked you to. Now
just do it. You'll learn the
reason why in a moment.

Sub-Mariner reluctantly flies out of the scene. Betty approaches
Captain America. They look out to where Sub-Mariner flew.

THEIR POV

Sub-Mariner hovers in the air. The large silver bugle is far in
the background.

BETTY (V.O.)
Is that far enough?

CAPTAIN AMERICA (V.O.)
I think he's just within range.

CAPTAIN AMERICA, BETTY, AND HUMAN TORCH

CAPTAIN AMERICA
Here goes.

He hurls his shield with all of his might.

BETTY
Is he in for a surprise!

THE HOVERING SUB-MARINER

He reacts to the off-camera shield.

SUB-MARINER (V.O.)
He's trying to hit me! All
right! Let him do his--

The shield bounces off of his chest, and he is knocked back several feet. The shield circles back and exits the scene. Sub-Mariner struggles to remain in the air and rubs his chest.

SUB-MARINER
Son of a--

CAPTAIN AMERICA, BETTY, AND HUMAN TORCH

Captain America easily catches his shield, much to Human Torch's surprise. Captain America smiles at him.

CAPTAIN AMERICA
Not only does my shield hit my
target every time, but it also
comes back to me.

HUMAN TORCH
Amazing.

The angry Sub-Mariner lands next to them.

SUB-MARINER

That hurt like hell! Where did you get that thing?

HUMAN TORCH

You said it was out of this world. Was it made from a meteor?

CAPTAIN AMERICA

No, Torch.

(sighs with much sadness)

It's made out of ectoplasm.

CAPTAIN AMERICA

Tears come down from his eyes. He has told the others about Bucky's involvement in his origin.

CAPTAIN AMERICA

Bucky told me that I can make my costume and shield appear at any time. He also said that my costume would make me an Olympic-level athlete. I am faster and stronger now. And I don't get tired so easily.

HUMAN TORCH, SUB-MARINER, AND BETTY

Betty has heard this before. The heroes take in the information. They then talk to the off-camera Captain America.

HUMAN TORCH

You're stronger than an Olympic athlete. None of them could have stood up to my jet blast.

SUB-MARINER

And this . . . Bucky never let on that he was a medium?

THE FOUR HEROES

Captain America sniffs and wipes away a tear.

CAPTAIN AMERICA

He used to have an imaginary friend when he was little. Maybe that friend was really a ghost. I don't know.

SUB-MARINER

Betty, how did you meet Captain America?

BETTY

He draws a comic strip for a local newspaper. He called in a favor and had a reporter contact me. I couldn't pass the chance to meet a real mystery man.

SUB-MARINER

You should have had me check him out.

BETTY

(now angry)

Namor, don't feel that you have to protect me just because I'm a woman! I've handled lots of dangerous cases before you came into my life!

SUB-MARINER

Betty--

BETTY

(calmer to Human Torch)

So did he pass the test?

HUMAN TORCH

The preliminary one, anyway.

(to Captain America)

Have you ever had any military training?

CAPTAIN AMERICA

Uh, sorry, no.

HUMAN TORCH

That's too bad. That means you'll
have to start boot camp.

BETTY

What did I tell you, Steve?

SUB-MARINER

(a bit jealous)
Steve?

Captain America puts his right hand out.

CAPTAIN AMERICA

Steve Rogers. Glad to meet you,
Sub-Mariner.

Sub-Mariner reluctantly shakes his hand.

SUB-MARINER

You may call me Namor.

Human Torch's left hand still burns. He uses his right one to
shake Captain America's hand. They smile at each other.

HUMAN TORCH

And I'm Jim Hammond. Glad to
have you on board, Steve.

CAPTAIN AMERICA

I'm glad to be on board.

BETTY

Then it's settled. Steve will
go with you two now.

(to Captain America)

And I will have your things
delivered to my apartment
on my day off.

Sub-Mariner scowls at Betty.

SUB-MARINER

Why are you doing that?

BETTY

(a bit put off)

Because his sister needs a roommate to pay the bills. Which means she will need the extra space. And since his things need a new home, they might as well be in my apartment.

(a beat, with emphasis)

And besides, it's none of your business.

CAPTAIN AMERICA

It's only temporary, I assure you, Namor.

SUB-MARINER

I suppose so.

HUMAN TORCH

Betty, it was nice meeting you, but we've got to be going.

Human Torch shakes Betty's hand while his left hand still burns.

BETTY

Goodbye, Jim. Thanks for coming.

HUMAN TORCH

It was fun. Goodbye, Betty.

Betty then hugs Captain America. Sub-Mariner crosses his arms.

BETTY

Make me proud, Steve. You're in the big leagues now.

CAPTAIN AMERICA

I'll do my best. Goodbye, Betty.

Betty releases him and smiles knowingly at Sub-Mariner.

BETTY

And you wipe that frown off your face!

She quickly walks over to him and holds the back of his head.

BETTY (CONT'D)

You know I'll always be your
girl!

She pulls his head parallel to the ground and kisses him very passionately. The other heroes gape and bug their eyes out. She eventually stops kissing him, and he stands upright. He is a bit breathless. She smirks at Human Torch and Captain America.

BETTY (CONT'D)

What can I say? I love a man
in swim trunks.

ALL-AMERICAN GIRL AND OTTO

He nervously watches her read his script.

VILLAIN FIVE (V.O.)

I wonder if my namesake had
something to do with his origin.

She stops reading and looks at Otto.

ALL-AMERICAN GIRL

I didn't know the Lady of the
Lake gave Lancelot a magical
shield.

OTTO

It supposedly gave Lancelot the
strength of three men.

(with a sly smile)

Captain America has superhuman
strength. And the things he can
do with his shield look like
magic.

ALL-AMERICAN GIRL

That's true. But I don't like
Captain America being the
reincarnation of Lancelot. He
was an adulterer and a traitor
to King Arthur.

OTTO

But Zeus gave power to Captain
Marvel. And we all know what
Zeus was like.

ALL-AMERICAN GIRL

I don't know. How about making
Captain America the reincarnation
of Galahad? He was pure of heart
and Lancelot's son. You can have
Cap inherit the shield from his
father instead.

OTTO

That sounds good. Let me make
a note of that on the script.

ALL-AMERICAN GIRL

Here you go.

She hands him the script.

OTTO

Thank you.

He writes a note on the top page. Then he sets the papers aside.
He hands her another set of clipped pages.

OTTO (CONT'D)

Now here's Mercury's origin.

She reads a few pages. Then she looks at Otto and grimaces.

ALL-AMERICAN GIRL

This is supposed to be his secret
origin?

To be continued in MERCURY.