

Sample #3 from upcoming webcomic *Gavel*

[Cafeteria. Gavel eating. Hero sits down at his table.]

Hero:

You must be Gavel.

Gavel:

Are you sure you want to sit here?

Hero:

This is where I usually sit, yeah.

Gavel:

Well, I'm too tired to get up and move, so deal.

Hero:

There's an awful lot of talk around here about you, Gavel.
My name's Fusion, by the way.

Gavel:

As in *Con*?

Fusion:

Yeah, you are a jerk.

Gavel:

I meant me, and piss off.

Fusion:

I hear you're having a lot of problems out there.

Gavel:

No big secret, I guess.

Fusion:

Don't feel so bad. My powers come and go. I can't make consistent radioactive beams when I need 'em.

Gavel:

So, you're not going to accidentally melt me down or something are you?

Fusion:

Not accidentally.

Gavel:

I don't know what I'm supposed to do. It's embarrassing, actually. Here I am in this superhero installation and I don't feel like I belong.

Fusion:

So, what are you supposed to be able to do?

Gavel:

All fire stuff, that and fly but I haven't been off the ground since I fell off that rooftop and landed in the dumpster.

Fusion:

Welcome to Earth. I always wanted to fly. That must be cool, huh?

Gavel:

Used to be. So, is everybody a full-time superhero? I don't see anyone plain clothes around here.

Fusion:

You never will. Plainclothes are for our alter ego/private lives. That's one of the major rules around here: Do not reveal your identity. Kind of stupid, though, all of our information goes right into the network right next to the bad guys. If the network got hacked, we'd all be screwed.

Gavel:

If, he says. So, what can you tell me about Saraphim?

Fusion:

As in...

Gavel (shifts in seat):

Is she seeing anyone?

Fusion:

Ha! You aren't even in the same league, no you're in a dumpster and she's in the heavens: Seraphim/grungy human. They say her tolerance for poisons keeps her safe from the guys.

Gavel (annoyed):

Yeah, got it. Ha.

Fusion:

She and Solar have an on-again off-again 'thing'. You can't get any more elite than that. Besides, if Solar wasn't in the picture, you'd have to fight through about a thousand superhero elites.

Gavel:

Guess that explains her being a bit on the cold side. See, you might not know this, but when I got here, I kicked the shit out of good-old-gold.

Fusion:

Hey, hey! Watch the language –

Gavel:

Yeah, yeah, I know already.

Fusion (completely dismissive):

Anyway, you couldn't lay a hand on Solar. Not a chance; get out of here.

Gavel:

That guy looks like one of the baddies from my world only there are three of them where I come from and they work for the no-eyed S.O.B. I chased here.

Fusion:

Wow, you come from a screwed-up world!

Gavel:

I know, and here's the kicker, we don't have to wear ridiculous costumes.

Fusion:

Come on, the suits help distinguish us from the citizens. Besides, the suits help keep stats on us to help our development. They don't look so bad. You got a good look at mine, right?

Gavel:

Looks like a glorified onesie and this thing is clashing with my pride (tugging on his uniform).

Fusion (takes mouthful):

So, what do they wear in your world?

Gavel:

Street clothes, overcoats. The idea is not to stick out so much but still let wrongdoers know they can be taken out if they step out of line.

Fusion:

I guess it doesn't sound so bad. Look, it's like you said, people can see at a glance they'll be taken down if they act up. It's like the police; everyone settles down when they see squad cars.

Gavel:

Not where I come from.

Fusion:

Anyway, back to the whole Solar thing, does he know that he has an alternate self who's a villain?

Gavel:

Never mentioned it.

Fusion:

What's stopping you?

Gavel:

I don't see how that matters. None of the extra versions of him came through.

Fusion:

If he has an alternate, then so should you, right?

Gavel:

I guess.

Fusion:

For that matter, I have an alternate. Is there anyone with
my kind of power where you come from?

Gavel:

God, I hope not.

Fusion:

More importantly, Saraphim has an alternate.

[Both sit quietly in deep thought.]