

2014 MCC Creative Writing Contest

Fiction Category

Honorable Mention: Excerpt from “*The Kastron Virus: Uprising*,” by Matthew Meier

Jason grimaced as he looked at the battlefield around him. With the exception of Stuart, everyone was fighting the enemy with every ounce of strength they had. Stuart was hiding behind a chunk of a destroyed warship, too frightened to participate in the battle, much to Jason’s annoyance.

“The boy’s power is to disintegrate whatever he touches, and he doesn’t have the courage to use it.” Jason spat into the comlink built into his advanced alien battle armor, “He’d rather cower and hide then save his home planet!”

“I can hear you!” Stuart snapped as he poked his head out of his hiding spot. A stray energy blast, however, sent him diving for cover.

“It’s not like you’ve never shown fear, Jason!” Alice snapped as she rocketed over Jason’s head on her armor, “You have no right to give him this kind of crap. He has pentaphobia.”

As Jason looked around the battlefield, he saw a movement. Out of the corner of his eye, Jason saw Admiral Karnk, watching him fight. He immediately remembered other soldiers telling him about this Teazonian. He was a ruthless, cold-hearted killer, and wouldn’t hesitate to murder any who stands in his way. For the sake of the planet, he had to be taken down.

“Stu, Mason, Alice!” Jason shouted, “I see Karnk! Help me with him!”

Using their built in jet packs, the group quickly reached the Teazonian Admiral, who grinned menacingly as they landed.

“Not the first time I’ve fought one exposed to the Kastron Virus.” Karnk snarled, “Even if you’re mere children, it will be a pleasure watching you die.”

Jason fired his energy gun at the admiral. To his shock, the Teazonian skillfully dodged each shot. He chuckled seeing the surprise on Jason’s face.

“That’s the best you’ve got? I’m disappointed.” Karnk sneered. “I was led to believe that anyone who was exposed to the Kastron Virus would gain immense power. I guess you humans are just that weak.”

Jason felt his blood boil in rage. He fired several more shots from the weapon, and watched as his foe dodged them all. As he dodged, Karnk pulled out his own energy pistol, and fired once, knocking the energy gun out of Jason's hand.

"Use your powers." Karnk taunted, "If you want to have a slight chance at beating me, I suggest you try that."

"You wanna see power!" Mason snapped, "I'll show you a power!"

Triggering his ability of darkness, Mason created a dark claw of shadow energy, and sent it flying at Karnk. Anticipating the attack, the Teazonian nimbly dodged the shadow claw, and threw one of his daggers at Mason, sticking him in his armored shoulder. To Jason's shock, the blade went through the armor, causing Mason to stagger back, gripping his shoulder in pain.

"These daggers are made of Baltanite." Karnk snickered as Mason tore the weapon from his shoulder, "That is what your armor is made of, right? Ordinarily, it's basically unbreakable, but when matched against weapons made of the same metal, it can be damaged."

"How about you shut up and fight?" Jason snapped as he triggered his power, encasing his fists in blocks of solid ice.

"This will be over faster than I thought." Karnk chuckled. "You pathetic humans actually thought you stood a chance. How sad."

Enraged, Jason charged at Karnk, unleashing his power of ice at his enemy in the form of sharp, knife-like icicles. Mason and Alice assisted in the assault, by throwing shadow blasts, and firing energy rounds at the Teazonian.

Stuart stood back and watched. He was terrified of combat, his safety, and the planet. He wanted to help, but was too frightened to move. All he could do was stand by and watch his comrades. For a moment, Jason seemed to gain the upper hand on the Teazonian, but then his luck took a turn for the worse. As Jason prepared to slam Karnk with a powerful ice blast, his power failed him, only spraying the Teazonian with a soft icy mist.

"Oh, shit!" Jason snapped as Karnk grabbed Jason by the jaw, and threw him to the ground. As Jason struggled to escape, Karnk reached down, and tore several components from Jason's armor. One of them was his jetpack.

"Oh, was that important?" Karnk sneered as he pulled out another dagger, and stabbed Jason in the mid-section. Jason screamed in agonizing pain as he desperately tried to launch an ice blast at his foe, but only managed to freeze the Teazonian's horn in a small sheet of ice. "That's not going to work. Just surrender and accept death, it will be less painful for you."

"Leave him alone!" Mason snapped as he hurled a dark fist at Karnk. Mason watched as the Teazonian Admiral dodged the attack, and threw another dagger at him. Mason didn't have time

to react. The dagger struck him, cutting through the armor, just below his chest. Mason fell to the ground in pain as Karnk picked up Jason, and threw him on top of his friend.

As Karnk moved closer to the two wounded heroes, an energy blast flew by his face. Enraged, he turned to see Alice and Stuart standing nervously off to the side.

“You think distracting me can save your friends?” he snarled, “Dream on. They are of no help to anyone now, and as good as dead. I’ll take care of you two, then I’ll finish off your friends.”

“Stuart,” Alice said nervously, “get out of here now!”

Stuart, at that moment, would have loved to get away from the fight, but stood petrified with fear, unable to move.

“So, which one of you is the first to die?” Karnk asked. When neither of the two answered, he grinned. “So, I’ll decide for you.”

With blinding speed, Karnk pulled out another one of his daggers, and threw it at Stuart. Seeing the dagger coming at Stuart, Alice considered use her power to protect him, but her ability was completely drained. Feeling she had to protect Stuart, Alice knew she had only had one option. Stuart could only watch in petrified terror as Alice shoved him aside, and took the dagger meant for him in the chest.

Stuart felt hot tears spring to his eyes as he watched Alice fall to the ground. He quickly moved to her side as she looked up at him with the last bit of energy she had left. Stuart felt his tears run down his cheeks as Alice picked her head up slightly, and smiled at him. When she spoke to him, she did so weakly, and unsteadily.

“Do..don’t be...af...afraid...”

Alice’s body went limp, and her head fell back to the ground, looking up at the bright blue sky. Stuart, not wanting to believe she was dead, unsteadily extended his hand, and touched Alice’s armored hand. He felt his heart die as his power worked its magic on Alice’s body, watching in heartbroken sorrow as she turned to dust, and blew away in the light breeze. Grief stricken, he placed his hands over his face, and broke down sobbing.

“Well now.” Karnk snarled, “Did I kill your friend, or was that you? Tell me how it feels to lose...human?”

Stuart tightened his fists in rage. Words could not express the anger he felt burning inside of him. Anger at this Teazonian for killing Alice, anger at this alien race for destroying his planet, and anger at himself for not doing anything to save the only girl who had ever openly loved him. As he tightened his fists, a glowing red ball of incineration energy formed in the center of his hand.

“Speak up human!” Karnk snapped as he grabbed another dagger, “What will you do now?”

Stuart picked up his head as Karnk threw the dagger. With astounding speed, he extended his hand, causing the ball of incineration energy to grow larger. Allowing his anger to guide him, Stuart fired a blast at the impending dagger, turning it to dust before Karnk’s startled eyes as the young hero locked his eyes on him.

“I’ll kill you!”

Stuart triggered his jetpack, launching himself directly at Karnk as he fired multiple blasts of incineration energy at his girlfriend’s killer. Karnk managed to dodge Stuart’s attack, and succeeded in stabbing his leg as he flew past him, but even he knew he had to take this opponent down, and fast. Karnk grabbed several daggers, and threw them at Stuart. Three of the daggers embedded their blades in Stuart’s shoulder and hip, but the enraged hero pushed on, charging again and again at Alice’s killer. Karnk managed to dodge more of Stuart’s relentless charges, but it was only a matter of time before the boy scored a hit on him.

Fearful for his own safety, Karnk pulled out an energy pistol, and fired rapidly at Stuart as he charged again. Blinded by tears, Stuart didn’t bother to dodge the energy blasts. He just flew right into them, the blasts scorching his armor, shattering half of his visor, and cutting his head in several places, but he did not slow down. With tremendous force, Stuart slammed head first into Karnk’s midsection, shattering several of his ribs, and knocking him down. As the Teazonian desperately tried to scramble to his feet, Stuart landed next to him, looking down at him through his shattered, and blood-stained visor. Karnk, knowing he was beaten, looked up at Stuart in fear.

“Please!” he begged, “Spare me! I did you no harm!”

Stuart retracted what remained of his shattered, blood-stained visor, revealing his eyes, blazing with vengeance, as they overflowed with tears. In the center of Stuart’s hand, a glowing ball of red incineration energy appeared.

“You’ve caused me more pain than you’ll ever know.” Stuart said in a furious sob. Karnk tried to get back up, but a kick from Stuart sent him sprawling again. He looked up pleadingly as Stuart threw the red ball of energy at him. The instant it made contact with him, the energy began to eat away at his body, slowly transforming the Teazonian into a pile of dust. All Karnk could do was scream in agony as his entire body faded from existence, and his ashes scattered in the calm breeze. Alice had been avenged.

With the enemy defeated, Stuart collapsed on the ground and broke down crying. Jason and Mason, having seen the entire fight, unsteadily got to their feet and moved over to Stuart as he wept for his lost friend.

“I’m sorry Stu.” Mason said, holding his chest, trying to stop his blood from flowing out of the wound.

“She gave her life for you.” Jason said as he limped closer, “We can make a grave for her after this is over.”

Stuart, between sobs, said something quietly, but neither Jason nor Mason could understand what he had said.

“I’m sorry,” Jason said, “what?”

An earsplitting crash caused the two wounded heroes to jump back. A aura of dark red energy appeared around Stuart as he stood up, and looked at his allies, the red aura, and blood soaked features, giving his watering eyes a frightening appearance.

“I’m gonna kill them!” Stuart sobbed darkly as he triggered his jetpack, rocketing himself up towards the Teazonian warships. Mason tried to go after him, but a sharp pain in his shoulder caused him to stop.

“He’s gonna get himself killed!” Mason said, “What do we do?”

Jason looked up at the glowing red figure in the sky, then he turned his attention to the battle in front of him.

“We need to get somewhere safe.” Jason said, “We won’t be much of a challenge if anything attacks us when we’re in this state.”

“But Stuart will be out here alone.” Mason said.

Jason looked back at the glowing red figure in the sky, firing blasts of incineration energy at the Teazonians below, and sighed.

“Something tells me he can take care of himself from here.”

JUDGE’S COMMENTS

This action/violence piece has some interesting weaponry (ice blasts, energy rounds, incineration), and the villain Karnk has the best sneering lines. I liked the graphic novel dialogues, but I was a bit surprised that Karnk went down so quickly.

Jim Fatka served as judge for the 2014 contest. Mr. Fatka is a recently retired MCC English instructor who taught numerous writing and literature courses, including creative writing.