



As so often before, Captain Future had saved the Universe from the forces of evil. He had given the final report to the president hours ago and had started to head to the Spaceport. Doubtless his crew was eager to finally return home. The *Comet* would make it a short trip.

In the elevator of the Government Tower Joan Landor had run into him. She had enthusiastically offered to accompany him on his way to the Spaceport.

That had been five hours ago, and now day was turning to night. Yet, Captain Future couldn't find the courage to get up and return to the *Comet*. Joan had said, that it would be a pity to race through New York by car on such a beautiful day.

Therefore Captain Future gave himself into the capable hands of a native and they had walked. Their route had led them through Central Park, where a group of pantomimes had grabbed their attention.

A bench beneath a large tree turned out to be the ideal observation spot. However, Captain Future hadn't really seen much of the performance. Fascinated he had watched Joan. The agent had very much enjoyed the artists and the little pranks they played on the passer-bys.

The actors and the other visitors had left the park some time ago, but Captain Future couldn't bring himself to break the silence that had fallen between Joan and him.

So they sat silent, each of them lost in thought.

With a deep sigh the Captain finally started to say goodbye, but then he felt pressure against his throat.

Joan knew what the sigh meant. Her Captain would say goodbye and finally leave to join his crew at the Spaceport. He would fly to the Moon and they would only see each other again when grave danger threatened the Universe.

She had hoped this moment would never end. For a few hours the Captain had belonged to her alone. Joan decided to anticipate her companion. This time she would be the one to say goodbye and leave.

"Joan stood up – and saw a man directly behind the Captain.

Don't move! Or your friend will pay! These wires can take off his head without any trouble," said the scar-faced man and tightened the wires glimmering in the moonlight.

A second man spoke: "We want your money and other valuables, as well as the passwords to your accounts."

Joan looked, seemingly frightened at the heavily build man and tried desperately to find a way to get the Captain out off his predicament.

She took a step forward and got into the light of the Moon, her blond hair glowed golden in the light of Captain Future's home.

Their attackers saw for the first time what they had caught. Yet, none of them appeared to see the uniform and insignia of Planet-Patrol.

"Look what we have here. Seems as if we caught a beautiful little butterfly in our net. Such a nice thing as you will look good on me." His eyes spoke of evil intentions as the fatter of the two gangsters walked up to Joan.

"But leave something for me," demanded Scarface.

Joan saw that this would be a chance to get away unscathed. Joan took a step towards the Captain as if she expected his protection.

Fatty grabbed her, turned her around and pulled her to him. He licked his lips. Joan closed her eyes. She could feel his breath in her face. Eventually she could feel his lips on hers.

Joan brought her knee up. Her aggressor fell to the floor. With cat-like speed and precision she turned around, her right arm cut through the

air. Scareface screamed in pain and released on side of the wires.

The Captain reacted instantly and pushed himself backwards over the bank. He hit Scareface in the breast. The surprised robber flew against the tree behind the bank and sagged to the ground.

Captain Future turned around in worry, but Joan had already dealt with the other part of the duo. The handcuffs of the young agent chained the stocky man to the bench.

*"Come! See Central Park by night! Nowhere else can you see the stars like here!"* – Whoever coughed up that slogan seems to have never experienced Central Park by himself. – Are you okay, Captain?"

Joan stood in front of him. The Champion of the Universe could see the worry in her eyes. Her fingers trailed a gentle path along his neck. He took a step back.

"I'm alright, Joan. But we should take care of these to crim –"

The Captain saw a man and a woman running towards them and put himself in front of Joan, protecting her.

"We're police. It's OK!" called the rapidly approaching newcomers.

It turned out that Scareface and Fatty had been haunting the park for weeks. The two officers in civil clothes were supposed to be bait. Both had listened in awe to the Captain's story and taken the opportunity to shake the hand of the greatest hero in the Solar System.

They had to repeat the whole story when the backup of the two baits arrived. Finally, all hands were shaken and the officer headed to Headquarters with their capture of the day.

"We should go to the Spaceport. My crew certainly worries where I am lost."

"OK, Captain."

They walked together side by side in silence. Captain Future was deep in thoughts. At last, Captain Future broke the quietness of the night:

"Joan, what did you do to the man behind me? You were too far away to have a chance to hit him."

His companion looked up at him impishly.

"That was an old secret weapon of my family," Joan's grin widened, her eyes sparkling with joy, "The Corkscrew."

Joan, indeed, presented a corkscrew to the Captain.

"It's an old heirloom. My grandmother gave it to me. Most people laugh when they see it, but it is an incredible weapon and useful in many situations. Besides, few think that a corkscrew could be a weapon, therefore, nobody bothers to take it away from me. Remind me to tell you the story of Ezra and the red kiwi some day."

Captain Future and Joan had reached the port of the *Comet*.

"You are unbelievable, Joan. A corkscrew. I never knew what unorthodox weapons you employ."

Captain Future gave Joan the corkscrew back.

"There are many things you don't know about me. – Good Night, Captain," said Joan and went without a backward glance to the exit of the Spaceport.

The Futurecrew came from the well known little space ship to collect their wayward leader.

But Captain Future, Saviour of the Universe, looked befuddled after the young woman who had saved his life with a corkscrew.

2004, Sabina

*Disclaimer: I do not own Captain Future or any associated characters. I do not derive any kind of profit from this story. Additional characters, places and the story are my idea.*

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