

Get Famous

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Get Famous

by [2point5](#)

Summary

Grian Xelqua was not a superhero.

OR

how BTM came to be

Notes

ive been working on this fic for. literally months. sorry it took so long.

you absolutely do not need to read any of the other fics in this series to understand this, most of them don't even feature the same characters.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Grian Xelqua was not a superhero.

That was such an obvious statement it made him chuckle to even think it: of course he wasn't a

superhero, have you seen him?

He was 5'8", thin and light, with pale, easily bruised skin, with big, clumsy white wings, and glasses that made his beady black eyes bug out of his head. He was nothing like any of the heroes who kept the evil at bay. He was just a bony little man who worked the counter at the local book store (and occasionally crossdressed as "Ariane Griande" at the local gay bar, but that was one of his better kept secrets) who wore baggy jumpers and crisp ironed khakis and knew how to knit.

He was just a guy.

"No, but imagine you were more. Imagine you were a hero."

Grian hissed out a breath through his teeth, poking at the buttons of the register and waiting impatiently as the receipt scrolled out. "I'm sorry, sir, but I have... other things to do in my spare time."

"Like what?" The man before him leaned forward, green eyes glittering in the bright lights. He was handsome, in a strange, eccentric way, with brown hair that just barely brushed his collar and a well ironed brown and cream colored suit. His wheelchair was obviously custom made, fitting him perfectly, and the pearl earrings he wore looked to be real pearls. He had to be rich. Why, then, he was sitting in a tiny bookshop in downtown Evo, harassing the cashier, was beyond Grian.

"Like," Grian ripped the receipt free from the machine, handing it across the counter to the man. "Feeding my cats. Thank you for visiting, have a nice day."

"Oh, you're a cat lover!" The man said, excitedly. "Fantastic, a kindred spirit! Well, don't you ever wonder if your cats are proud of you?"

Grian blinked at the man, utterly underwhelmed, before shaking his head. "No. And I don't think I care all that much, either. Thank you for visiting, have a nice day."

The man pouted, but wheeled himself back a bit, before hesitating, and pulling out a small card from his coat pocket.

"Well, if you ever change your mind," He slid it across the counter, a look of complete earnesty on his face. "You can reach me there."

"Thank you for visiting," Grian said. "Have a nice day."

As the man left, he swept the card off the counter, walking towards the trash can in the corner, more than ready to forget the encounter, but something made him pause, looking down at the card.

Scar Goodtimes, the card announced in elegant font, CEO of ConCorp.

Oh.

Oh, that explained the strange familiarity of the man: he was the Scar Goodtimes, the third richest man alive, the founder of the huge tech company ConCorp. And Grian had just shooed him out of his shop.

Although, Grian decided, if he had recognized the man, he wasn't sure he would have changed anything. He didn't like rich people much, and just because a man had been on the cover of the most recent issue of Hermit City Recap didn't mean that he was a good person.

He called up his friend, Joel, to tell him the story. He expected laughter when he revealed the mysterious man's identity, or maybe confusion. Instead, he was met with silence.

"Joel?"

"Do you still have the card?" Joel asked, finally, his voice thoughtful. "Or did you throw it away?"

"Uh, I still have it," Grian frowned, shuffling through a stack of books. "I got distracted and put it back on the counter."

"Okay, call him," Joel said, and it was clear he'd already made his mind up. "You've wanted to be a hero since we were kids-"

"Oh, for god's sake," Grian rolled his eyes, adjusting his phone between his cheek and shoulder. "You know he's just farming for anyone who obviously has powers, right? He probably has loads of people all lined up-"

"-And you're the most competent of the lot, we both know-"

"-He probably just walked in and saw my wings, Joel."

"So? You've finally got a shot to be a hero, Grian."

"I'm not a hero, though!" Grian cried, exasperated. "I'm just a guy! I would never survive a fight against a villain-"

"So hopefully you'll get a team," Joel said, evenly. "Come on, mate, give it a shot."

"I'm not- I don't-" Grian sighed, pressing a palm to his forehead and leaning against a nearby shelf. He could feel a headache coming on. "I'll think about it."

Joel cheered while he flipped the sign on the door to CLOSED, frowning at the stormy clouds over the city with apprehension. It looked like it was going to rain, maybe even storm, and he felt more than a little uneasy at the thought.

It was drizzling as he unlocked his bike, already mourning his lack of a raincoat as he tucked his massive wings against his back. He let out a little huff as someone swooped overhead, flying over the small town without a care in the world. Flying licenses were expensive, and unless you had a good job or a reason to fly a lot, there was no point in getting one, which meant that Grian hadn't been able to leave the ground in public for weeks. He could fly, sure, but he only ever tried it on his own private property.

It started raining as he headed home, and his front tire slipped on a patch of mud. He swore, slamming his heels into the ground and raising his wings over his head in an ineffective sort of umbrella.

He paused, breathing heavily, looking up at the low clouds bitterly. He could probably fly over them, he thought, angrily.

Jimmy was at home, taking up space as always, one leg propped up on the ottoman, staring dully at the television. As soon as Grian walked in, he looked up, blinking at him.

"Oh, hey. You're wet."

"Well noticed, Tim," Grian said, spreading out one wing and flapping it hard. It nearly knocked a

picture off a wall, and Jimmy moved to stand, but Grian ignored it, moving to the kitchen. “You won’t believe who came in today.”

“Who?” Jimmy asked, muting the TV. “Is Martyn back in town?”

“Nope,” Grian said, opening the fridge and poking around a bit. “Scar Goodtimes.”

“Goodtimes... the multi millionaire?” Jimmy came to stand in the doorway, tilting his head curiously. “Like, the ConCorp guy?”

“Yeah,” Grian laughed, pulling out the jug of milk and sniffing it. “He was looking for people to sign up to be superheroes.”

“You’re joking,” Jimmy blinked in surprise. “And he came to a bookshop?”

“I know, right?” Grian shook his head. “I guess he saw my wings and figured I had a shot.”

Jimmy went quiet, his dull amber eyes narrowing in thought as he rubbed his beard absently. “...You kind of do, though?”

“Not you too,” Grian groaned. “Joel tried to convince me to call him-”

“Maybe you should,” Jimmy shrugged. “I mean, you’ve always wanted-”

“If you say I’ve always wanted to be a superhero, I swear to god, Timmy, I’m going to smash a plate over your head.”

“Grian, I say this as your brother and friend,” Jimmy said, seriously. “If you have a chance to become a hero, I think you should take it.”

Grian laughed in his face, but secretly, he was starting to wonder if he had a point. He had always harbored dreams of being a hero, of being famous, but... it was ridiculous. He wasn’t a hero.

“Go back to your couch, Timmy,” He said, slamming the fridge door on the younger man’s hand. “I’m not going to call him.”

Jimmy stared at him as he made a sandwich, shaking his head and retreating to the living room.

The card was still in his pocket, and he was realizing slowly that it would probably be wise to throw it away before he forgot. Still, he hesitated for a moment, holding the card out over the trash can, staring at it, rereading the words printed on the small piece of paper, over and over and over until he could feel them ingrained into his memory.

And then he shook himself and threw away the card.

Imagine you were more.

Imagine.

Imagine he was a hero, he was helping people, he was doing something that made people happy.

He hissed in annoyance and ate his sandwich.

He didn't stop thinking about it for the entire time he was in the shower, and for the whole time he was getting dressed, and for the whole time he lay in bed.

Joel had told the truth, he had always wanted to be a hero.

He'd considered it before, considered signing up for the certification, but he was 28, he didn't have time for childish delusions. Delusions of saving people, of doing good, of changing the world.

It wasn't like he wanted fame or anything, he didn't want to be treated as a celebrity, he really truly just wanted to make sure people were safe.

He groaned, digging his thumbs into his eyes until colors swam across his eyes.

Finally, he shoved himself upright, groaning as he felt his spine crack. It wasn't too late, only 11:30.

It's not like he was unhappy with his life- the bookstore was nice, not too busy, and living with Jimmy was... maybe not easy, but it was safe... but he had to admit, it was... boring, sometimes. Nothing like he'd dreamed of as a kid.

That and they needed to move. The basement was perpetually flooded, the electricity was shot and there was mold in the bathroom ceiling.

Maui blinked at him irritably from the foot of the bed as he moved.

"Are you proud of me?" Grian asked, gently. "Is Pearl?"

Maui 'mrrp'ed, rolling on his back.

He didn't remember the number as well as he thought, leaving him to shuffle through the kitchen trash for the card, desperately praying Jimmy didn't walk in and see him like this.

The phone rang for just long enough that he debated hanging up, debated just leaving it, but then there was a click, and a smooth, calm voice said, "Hello, ConCorp private offices, Scar Goodtimes speaking. What can I do for you?"

"It's Grian Xelqua," Grian said, wincing immediately. "Um, from the bookstore? You told me you were interested in... uh... hiring heros?"

"Not hiring them, my dear friend," Goodtimes said, his voice warming already, a smile audible over the phone. "Making them. I'm going to make you a hero, Grian."

Something about the way he said his name, all warm and proud, made Grian grin, although he knew it was stupid. "Um... I do have a few requirements first. Like... if I do agree to work with you I need a couple reassurances."

"Of course, anything at all!"

"One, I need a new apartment for me and my brother. He's not... he doesn't have the money to live alone, so until he can get a job, he needs someone else to pay the bills," Grian said, leaning against the fridge, trying to sound assertive and confident. "I will not move away from him, but we can't stay here. Understood?"

"Easy, done. What else?"

"I need to be allowed to choose a team. I'm not going to work alone, but I also don't want to get shoved with random people I might hate."

There was a pause on the other side, before Scar hummed quietly. "Hm... I'm not sure you'll have

complete authority on this, but I'll see if I can give you a say."

"Fine. Also," Grian paused, thinking. "I want insurance."

"Health, dental, and paid vacation," Scar chuckled. "And we'll pay off your student loans."

"Bold of you to assume I went to college," Scar laughed again, and Grian could hear something rustling in the background. Abruptly, it occurred to him how late it was, the other man was probably in bed. "Ah, I'm sorry, did I wake you up?"

"Hm? Oh, no, don't worry about it. I had just finished up some work, and was about ready to drift off. You're lucky you called when you did, a few minutes later and I probably would have been asleep."

"Oh, I'm sorry, I won't keep you much longer then."

"Ah, it's really alright. Do you have anything... Friday?"

"Pardon?"

"Do you have anything on Friday, at around 6 pm? I would love to set up a face to face interview of sorts, to see what we can come up with."

"Um, no, I'm free Friday," Grian said, mentally running through his week. "Where do you want to meet up?"

"Ah, maybe that old diner... What's it called, Tomahawk's? Yeah, Tomahawk's! How does that sound?"

"Sounds fantastic," Grian found himself grinning. "I'll see you then Mister Goodtimes."

"See you then, Grian."

The next few days passed with a strange, dreamlike quality, every day ticking by both so quickly and so slowly that Grian couldn't name a single event in that time. It felt like the only thing that mattered, the only thing he could even think about, was the meeting.

What should he wear? Should he be assertive or relaxed? Should he try to charm Goodtimes or should he just be his genuine self? Should this be considered a business meeting or an interview?

Finally, Friday arrived, and work buzzed by, and then he was standing in front of Tomahawk's diner, wearing a red sweater and a brown blazer, desperately running his hand through his hair to make it stay down.

Goodtimes had already been seated at a little table near the kitchen, and he was looking happily through the menu when Grian sat down.

"Ah, Grian!" Goodtimes beamed. "Hello! Sorry, I would have grabbed a booth but those really aren't very wheelchair accessible."

"Understandable," Grian smiled back, a bit uncomfortably. "Um. So, you said you wanted to discuss the details-"

"Oh, please, Grian, let's do some small talk first. Just chat about things. How was work today?"

"It..." Grian blinked. "It was good, I guess? I sold an encyclopedia set, which was kind of cool..."

we don't sell a lot of those, it's mostly text books or fiction."

"Mhm," Goodtimes tilted his head. "Would you say you like working there? I'd think it'd get a bit... boring, after a while?"

"Yeah, you'd think so, but it's actually pretty nice," Grian smiled a bit, thinking about his years spent there. "Sort of... relaxing. Are you much of a reader, Mister Goodtimes?"

"Oh please, call me Scar," Goodtimes beamed. "And, no, not particularly. I've never been too good with words, written or spoken. The wires in my brain get crossed and the words on the page start to swim or I end up saying something all funny sounding."

"Ah, dyslexia?"

"Perhaps, I never got formally tested. But that's why my dear partner, Cub, does all the important business meetings and press releases and interviews."

"Well, clearly your brain's done you well enough, if you're the third richest man alive."

Scar laughed at that. "I would be nowhere if not for Cub. I owe him... I owe him a lot." His voice grew quiet toward the end, a sort of melancholy expression falling over his face.

"If I may ask," Grian said, slowly, trying to figure out how to phrase it. "Why are you doing this and not him?"

"Because, dear Grian, this isn't specifically a ConCorp business. This is... a personal endeavor."

"And what exactly is this endeavor?" Grian asked curiously. "You told me you're going to make me into a superhero, but you didn't tell me why."

"Well, that's..." Scar hesitated. "It's a bit of an odd story... I've always wanted to be a superhero, ever since I was a kid, but, well, that's obviously not going to be possible, not with my health what it is. So, I figured if I put together and sponsored a team of heroes, I could live vi-gar-iously through you. If that makes sense?"

Grian glanced sadly at the man's wheelchair. "Yeah, I... I guess so."

"So, would you be interested? I need an honest yes or no answer here."

"... Yes. I'm interested."

"And this isn't just a pity thing, is it?"

"No," Grian smiled ruefully. "I've been living with my brother for long enough to know not to fall for disability guilt trips."

Scar grinned, but thankfully didn't inquire further. "Alright. In that case, would you like to look at the list of names I have of possible teammates?"

"I would love to."

Seth "Impulse" Varnus was first on the list. A construction contractor with super strength and explosive powers, he apparently made a killing in demolition.

There were probably hundreds others, but he was the first who caught Grian's eye, so he was the first they approached.

They found him during his lunch break, sitting in the shade of a tree and eating his soup happily.

"Hello Impulse," Scar smiled cheerfully. "My name is Scar Goodtimes, and this is my associate Grian Xelqua (smile, Grian) and we're here to give you a business offer."

Impulse looked around for a moment, as if expecting someone else to be around they could be talking to. He was a large man, with closely cropped brown hair and keen yellow eyes. When he apparently reached the conclusion that they had to be talking to him, he turned back to blink at them for a moment.

"Me?"

"Yes. You're Impulse Varnus, aren't you?"

"Um. Yeah, I am. Sorry, I wasn't... You're Scar Goodtimes? Like, the millionaire?"

"Yes, that's me," Scar's smile hadn't wavered yet, but now it seemed to grow a little more forced. "Don't know if I can think of any others."

"Sorry," Impulse said, again, then, after a pause. "You said something about a business offer?"

"We're looking for people interested in being superheroes," Grian stepped in, helpfully, before Scar could blow a gasket. "Your name came up, and we wanted to inquire if you were, indeed, interested."

"A superhero," Impulse sat back, rubbing his chin thoughtfully. "I don't know... I'm not really a heroic guy, I don't think, I'm just kind of here."

"Look, man," Grian sighed. "I'm the only other guy signed up for this thing, and I can promise you're way more of a hero than I am."

Impulse stared at him, clearly thinking. Something about made Grian think that he was a lot smarter than he'd initially seemed. "...Okay... okay, would I get paid, I guess would be my first question."

"Of course!" Scar beamed, clapping his hands. "You get paid as much as you need, we'll pay for whatever housing you want and we'll pay for insurance."

"And student debt," Grian piped in. "That too."

"That too," Scar smiled at Impulse sweetly. "Any other questions?"

"Can I... can I stay in my apartment? It's actually pretty nice, and I like my roommates-"

"Is it in Hermit City? Because otherwise there may be a commute-"

"No, yeah, it's in the city. By the park, actually."

"Ah, a lovely neighborhood," Scar said, nodding. "Anything else?"

"Impulse!" Someone called from the worksite. "Break's over!"

Impulse waved at them, staring Scar and Grian down. "Why me? How did you find my name among millions?"

"Because," Scar smiled. "According to a survey you filled out in twelfth grade, your biggest dream

was to become a hero."

Grian's eyes widened. He remembered that survey. He had taken it too, and had answered it in the exact same way. He had no idea how Scar had found out the results, or how he'd tracked them down nearly a decade later, but he found himself duly impressed.

"And how do you know that hasn't changed?"

"Maybe it has," Scar shrugged. "But if it had, I don't think you'd still be talking to us, would you?"

Impulse stared at them with those eerie yellow eyes.

"Impulse! Your break is over!" The voice sounded all the more insistent now, but Impulse's expression didn't change. "Get your ass over here!"

"Alright," He said finally, but not to his coworker, to Scar and Grian, soft and secret. "Alright, I'll become a hero."

Scar, Impulse and Grian ended up meeting at the ConCorp headquarters, to go through the rest of the names.

"Shelly Rochet?" Grian asked, from where he sat on Scar's desk. "Lightning powers?"

"Oh, I think I know her," Scar hummed. "Concert violinist for Hermit City Orchestra."

"Yeah, I doubt she's unhappy with her life."

"Scott Smajor?" Impulse read, flipping a page back and forth, frowning at the print. "It doesn't say what his power is-"

"Doesn't have one," Grian shrugged. "I went to school with him, he's... kind of friends with my brother."

"So he's off the list," Scar hummed. "This is... significantly more difficult than I thought it'd be."

"We lucked out with you," Grian said, nudging Impulse's leg. "Sucks that it looks like it might just be the two of us."

"How'd Scar even find you?" Impulse asked, curious. "Or have you guys been in cahoots this whole time?"

"He walked into my workplace and gave me a card," Grian snorted. "Just like that."

"Just like that," Scar grinned, before his eyes slid to the door and his eyebrows raised. "Cub! Hey, I didn't see you there...?"

Leaning against the doorframe, Cub Fansley chuckled, nodding. "Yeah, I figured."

The cofounder of ConCorp was a short man, with a face of indistinguishable age. He looked to be in his mid thirties, until the light hit his face just right, when he could have been Scar's father. His hair was longish, and steely gray, but when he ran a hand through it, it momentarily looked short and black, and his eyebrows were absolutely too dark for the gray to be natural. He wore a white suit with a black tie and shiny black shoes, a single sprig of baby's breath in his lapel.

He was the polar opposite of Scar, except for his smile, which seemed to reek of the same casual confidence as the other man's.

"You guys working on your superhero thing?" He drawled. "Any progress?"

"Ugh, not particularly," Scar moped, slouching in his wheelchair. "We can't just have a team of two, though, the minimum for a team is four, so..."

"What benefits were you guys promised?" Cub asked curiously, wandering into the room and picking up a file at random. "Just so I know how much this is draining ConCorp."

"I told you," Scar huffed, tugging the man's sleeve until he sank into a crouch beside him with an ease that spoke of practice. "This is coming out of my cut."

"Mhm," Cub rubbed his chin. "Alright, alright."

"Do us a favor," Grian said abruptly. "Pick a file, any file, at random."

Cub didn't hesitate to question it, reaching out and selecting a random file. "Let's see... Pearlescent Moon."

"Power?" Impulse asked, tilting his head. "And where do they live?"

"She has... light manipulation and flight," Cub read, slowly. "And... ah. There's a problem. She currently resides in the Evo County Jail for theft and vandalism."

"Huh," Scar said, rubbing his chin. "That could work... how much pull do we have over the jail?"

"Not a lot," Cub hummed. "But I'm sure we can arrange something."

"Wait, wait, wait," Grian perked up. "We're hiring a criminal? You're sure of this?"

Scar and Cub exchanged a look, before Scar sighed. "It's up to you two, this is your team."

"I'm... I'm on board with it," Impulse said, carefully. "I guess... Grian, what do you think?"

Grian cracked his knuckles, one at a time, scowling at the file. He wasn't sure what to think of this... vandalism and theft were both fairly minor crimes, but they were still crimes.

He looked up. Everyone was gazing at him, the weight of the decision on his shoulders.

"Yeah, why not," He sighed. "Hometown pride, I suppose."

A week later, and the court agreed to release Pearl for a sort of probationary period, letting her have limited freedom in exchange for a month of community service- or, in this case, hero work.

Impulse and Grian picked her up out front of the jail building, in Impulse's truck.

She wasn't... quite what Grian was expecting, to be honest. She was small, perhaps even smaller than him, with a nest of sandy brown hair with silver streaks that tangled down to her collarbones. Her eyes were wide and blank white, her skin pale and tinged a vague silver sheen, like someone had brushed eyeshadow over all of her body.

She was also a good deal younger than he'd thought she'd be.

"Allo," She said, climbing in the backseat of the pickup, looking between them. "You guys are the hero people, yeah?"

"Yeah. I'm Grian, that's Impulse," Grian gestured to the other man, who smiled at her in the

rearview mirror. "We're teammates now, I guess."

"Pleasure," She bared her teeth, amused. "So, where's this Scar guy, anyway?"

"His office, I presume," Grian shrugged, fiddling with the air conditioning. "Spends a lot of his time there."

"So is he, like, the mysterious and suave type of recluse millionaire? Or more eccentric and wacky?"

"Eccentric and wacky." Impulse and Grian answered together.

"Oh, I cannot wait to meet him," She sat back. "Do you guys think we'll get famous from this?"

"I don't think it matters, we're doing this to be good people," Impulse frowned. "To help people."

"Speak for yourself, I'm doing this to get out of highway cleanup duty."

"I'm doing this because I want a new apartment," Grian piped up. "Helping people is just a side thing."

Impulse sighed, shaking his head, and Grian realized that somehow, they already fit, already snapped together like puzzle pieces.

The next few weeks passed quickly.

Pearl really did fit in with them, slotting into their little team with ease. When Grian started trouble, she went along with it, when Impulse needed to sit in silence, she was there, when Scar had an insane idea, she was there to either encourage him or talk him down. She knew exactly what was needed, and who needed it.

For a criminal, she was a delight to be around.

A few weeks after her recruitment, they met at a local restaurant to grab a bite to eat, and discuss their next move.

"We need four for a team," Scar mourned, taking a sad bite of his sandwich. "And I've been doing phone calls all morning, there's no way we're going to find another member."

"Can't we get, like, Cub to do it?" Grian asked. "Or one of your other employees?"

Scar scowled at that, the closest Grian had ever seen him to being genuinely angry. "Cub's not my employee. He is my friend and confidant, and he does not deserve to be reduced- but no. No, unfortunately, Cub wants nothing to do with this, and I don't want to bring ConCorp into this very personal business."

"Sorry," Grian said, sheepishly. "I really didn't mean-"

"Don't worry about it," Scar said, tiredly. "I understand."

"So, we still need another member?" Pearl asked, scanning the restaurant. "Where'd our waiter go?"

"Uh, over there," Impulse gestured. "Why?"

"Hey!" She waved the man down, smiling brightly at him. "Hey, I have a question?"

The man, a deathly pale wisp of a man with sunken beady eyes and an almost cartoonish mustache, cleared his throat, adjusting his collar. "Right. Um, what's your question?"

"Do you want to be a superhero?" Pearl beamed, leaning forward. "Cause we can do that for you."

The whole table went silent for a beat, before everyone sprang into movement, trying to speak over each other, to each other and to the poor waiter who looked like he was about to pass out.

"There's a process," Impulse cried. "You can't just- there's a process!"

"Pearl you can't just say that to people," Grian hissed. "Everyone in Hermit City is going to know we're making a hero team-"

"Oh that's genius, why didn't I think of that," Scar cheered, clapping his hands. "Gosh, that makes everything so much more simple-"

"Um," The waiter said. "Er."

"Everyone quiet down," Pearl said, patting the air as if that would help at all. "Sh sh sh. Everyone shh."

Eventually they did end up winding down, leaving them all staring at the waiter, who looked unbearably uncomfortable with the situation, his eyes wide and glassy.

"So, what's your name- Mumbo? Is that what your name tag says?" Pearl squinted. "Mumbo. Do you want to be a superhero?"

"I mean," Mumbo cleared his throat. "Well, I mean, yeah, sure, who doesn't, but, but er- I don't-"

"Fantastic," Pearl turned to Scar. "We have our fourth member!"

"It doesn't work like that," Impulse said again. "There's requirements!"

"What's your power?" Scar asked, sweet and charismatic. "If you don't mind me asking?"

"I can... well, gosh, um... may I?" Mumbo gestured to Grian's wings. "It won't hurt, I promise."

Grian hesitated, looking at Scar, who shrugged. Finally, he exhaled nervously, extending one wing towards Mumbo.

Mumbo breathed deeply, brushing one hand across the primaries, and then, suddenly, feathers bloomed across his cheeks, tracing his cheek bones. Grian yelped, jerking away, but the feathers remained.

"I could also, um, make wings, if I wanted to," Mumbo said, nervously. "It depends on how much of your power I want to take-"

"That's amazing," Grian breathed. "So, you can just touch someone and take their power-"

"Oh, gosh, no, not take, just... just copy," Mumbo said, nervously, rubbing his cheeks. The feathers fell off without fanfare, leaving his face smooth again. "It's entirely temporary too."

"How have you not been snatched up yet," Scar said, breathlessly. "You're perfect!"

Mumbo blushed furiously, clearing his throat three or four times and shuffling his feet.

"Impulse?" Pearl asked. "You cool with this?"

Impulse let out a labored groan. "I mean... if Scar's alright with it-"

"-I am-"

"-Then... yeah. Yeah, alright."

"Alright," Grian smiled at Mumbo. "Welcome to the team."

Mumbo glowed, smiling to reveal sharp canines, and Grian decided that this was definitely the best decision he'd made in a while.

End Notes

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