

TEEN TITANS**"It's How You Play The Game"****Outline - 05/21/03****By Dwayne McDuffie****TEASER**

TITANS TOWER - OPS. The Titans' exceptionally boring housekeeping chores are interrupted when they hear a <TRUMPET SOUND>. To their amazement, a PORTAL opens in space and a mysterious figure called HERALD (Mal Duncan, perhaps the most boring Titan ever, in the comic book continuity) appears. Herald has Golden Invitations to the "Contest of Heroes," a friendly competition between the greatest young heroes in the world. All of the Titans are intrigued. Starfire is thrilled, this reminds her of a bewilderingly bizarre contest back on her own planet, although it isn't at all clear how it's similar. As she continues to rave about how cool the contest is, Herald interrupts her. This contest is for boys only. Raven is dismissive, "Typical." Starfire is disappointed, but quickly decides that she and Raven can participate one of her homeworld's traditional ceremonies while the boys are gone. She begins to explain. Raven grabs Cyborg by the lapels, comically pleading, "Take me with you!" But it's not to be.

The contest is being held on "Heroes Island," far away. Beast Boy wants to know how to get there. Herald blows his horn and space turns inside out.

HEROES ISLAND. In answer to Beast Boy's question, Herald and the boys appear on the beach of a wondrous island. Beast Boy's question is answered, "Oh." As the boys look around in wonder, we ...

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

HEROES ISLAND. The Boys have been teleported to the island, where they meet the other contestants, AQUALAD, SPEEDY, WILDEBEAST, JERICHO, RISK, RED STAR, JOTO, DAMAGE and RINGER (a new hero who can produce "energy rings" with various effects). The boys already know Aqualad, but the others are new to them. Robin and Speedy are aware of each other by reputation and after a demonstration of Speedy's amazing archery skills, topped by Robin's incredible trick with a boomerang, the two are well on the way to a mutual boy-crush.

ISLAND TRAM - CONTINUOUS. Herald takes the boys on a tour of Heroes Island. As they see the various locations where the contests will take place; forest, quarry, aerie, mountains, et cetera, the boys begin some good-natured trash-talking. All of them are quite sure that they will win the contest. When Damage goes a bit too far while insulting Beast Boy, Robin shows his teeth, cutting Damage down with a boast of his own. It's funny but a touch too aggressive, this isn't Robin's best side showing.

The tour also includes a look at the boys' quarters, filled with everything the guys could ever want, food, game rooms, cool technology, training facilities, et cetera. They can't wait to try out the stuff but Herald wants to introduce them to someone first.

GAMEMASTER'S MOUNTAIN. The guys arrive at the spectacular, mountaintop headquarters of the awesome and mysterious GAMEMASTER. HERALD introduces them to Gamemaster, the very cool and likeable master of ceremonies of the event. Gamemaster shows them THE PRIZE that the champion will win. The audience can't see it, but it throws a golden glow on the faces of the contestants. Whatever it is, they *really* want it... As we see their reactions to the Prize, our heroes eyes briefly <FLASH>, matching the glow flickering on their faces. Is the prize somehow exerting influence over them? It's too brief a moment to say for sure. What's very clear is that the boys will do anything to win this great prize.

GAME DAY: ROUND ONE. As the heroes warm up, a STATUS BOARD graphically shows the pairings: Robin v. Red Star, Cyborg v. Risk, Damage v. Jericho, Aqualad v. Ringer, Beast Boy

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v. Wildebeast, Joto v. Speedy. We will always be able to tell where the characters stand by referring back to this display. Everyone's having fun. Losers are "taken off the board" by <VANISHING>.

BIG ACTION MONTAGE. Herald sounds the horn and the contests begin at several locations; water, sand, sky, forest. The very cool set piece battles begin, demonstrating the powers, resolve and wit of our characters. We intercut between snippets of:

ROBIN V. RED STAR. Robin's agility is too much for Red Star's energy powers. Robin tricks Red Star into defeating himself and poses action hero-style as his opponent <VANISHES>

CYBORG V. RISK. Risk's invulnerability is no match for Cyborg's strength.

DAMAGE V. JERICHO. After Damage demonstrates his energy blast, taking out an entire cliff face, Jericho hastily signs "I give up!"

AQUALAD V. RINGER. Aqualad is taking a beating from Ringer's many energy effect rings, until he maneuvers himself into the water.

JOTO V. SPEEDY. Joto's fire powers are countered at every turn by Speedy's marksmanship and trick arrows. Speedy is as cool as Robin, if that's possible.

BEAST BOY V. WILDEBEAST. Despite his clever use of his shapeshifting powers, Beast Boy is overcome by Wildebeast. Round One is over!

THE STATUS BOARD. We can see the Second Round match ups as the winners prepare for the second round; ROBIN V. CYBORG, DAMAGE V. AQUALAD, WILDEBEAST V. SPEEDY.

As the guys warm up, Cyborg asks Robin if he's seen Beast Boy, or for that matter *any* of the losers. Robin isn't really paying attention, he's busy trying to psych-out Cyborg, reminding him of the many times he's beaten him in practice. "This ain't practice." Both kids eyes <FLASH> with the golden Prize Energy as they bicker. Cyborg shakes it off and gets back on point. "Where's Beast Boy?" Robin

blows it off, "He's probably back home with the girls."

GAMEMASTER'S MOUNTAIN. Very close on Beast Boy, pounding on an unseen BARRIER. Wider to reveal he's somehow TRAPPED in a TRADING CARD, held in the hand of the GAMEMASTER. Gamemaster has been watching the proceedings on his giant screens. He puts Beast Boy's card down on a table next to some others, there's a card for every hero whose lost a match. Gamemaster <LAUGHS>, "Whoever wins the contest, I always win the game!"

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

ROUND TWO MONTAGE. After a REFRESHER from the Status Board, HERALD congratulates the winners and again shows them the prize. This time we're sure their wyes glow with the Golden Light of the Prize. All of the guys start trash-talking again. It's actually getting ugly. Cyborg tries to diffuse the arguing, "Hey guys, it's just a friendly competition, remember?" Robin and Speedy push him aside so that they can continue capping, teaming up to make fun of Damage, Aqualad and Speedy's gimmicks and costumes. Especially Damage, who has been acting like a cocky jerk all day. Cyborg can see that something's really wrong, he looks up at the mountaintop and walks away from the scene. Herald sees him leave and frowns before blowing the horn for Round Two, again intercut for maximum excitement:

DAMAGE V. AQUALAD. Aqualad uses his control of sea creatures to surprise attack Damage but Damage's energy attacks still prove just too much for Aqualad.

SPEEDY V. WILDEBEAST. Again, Speedy's got an arrow for every occasion. Using gimmick arrows we haven't seen before, he takes out Wildebeast.

MEANWHILE, Robin's ready to fight but Cyborg is a no-show! Herald congratulates an irritated Robin. Cyborg forfeits the match. Robin, who thinks Cyborg chickened out, gets a by to the final round. His eyes flash with Golden Prize Energy as he snarls, "Where'd he run off to?"

GAMEMASTER'S MOUNTAIN. CYBORG is <CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN> until he reaches the Gamemaster's stronghold.

INSIDE. Cyborg watches from a hiding place as the Gamemaster watches Round Two on his screens. When Aqualad loses, Cyborg sees him <VANISH> from the screen and <APPEAR> in a Trading card! Enraged, Cyborg confronts GM, commanding him to restore Beast Boy and his other new friends to normal. Herald <APPEARS> behind Cyborg and turns him into a Trading Card. Cyborg pounds impotently on his prison as Gamemaster puts him on the table.

ROUND THREE. Robin watches, cheering for his friend Speedy as Speedy defeats their mutual "enemy," Damage. Robin congratulates his pal and they seem genuinely happy for each other's success, "May the best man win," says Robin as they

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shake hands). Herald gives gives them both another look at the ultimate prize. Their eyes <FLASH> with golden energy and greed as they prepare to fight, "I intend to," says Speedy, as the two heroes face off in what clearly will be a no-holds-barred battle.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FINAL ROUND. SETPIECE BATTLE. It's Robin v. Speedy in a spectacular display of skills. It should be fun but something's wrong, both boys are losing control as they fight harder and harder. The battle goes from heroic, to intense, to downright nasty as these two friends let their ambition get the best of them. By the end, we aren't rooting for either of them, we just want it to stop. Finally, Robin gets the better of Speedy, "I win!!" Speedy has the last word as he <VANISHES>, "You may have won the prize but you just lost a friend."

Victorious Robin is stricken by pangs of conscience, there's no one to celebrate with, his victory seems hollow. "You won't feel that way after you've claimed your prize." Herald takes him to Gamemaster's Srronghold (**we have to go back here, it's been the villain's place of power all episode. That's where the cards are, that's where he has to be beaten**). Herald Blows his horn...

GAMEMASTER'S MOUNTAIN. ... and Robin appears before the Gamemaster who explains what's going on, showing him his Dwayne McDuffie • TEEN TITANS • "How You Play The Game" • 05/21/03

friends captured in the cards and thanking him for his "help" in collecting the others. We learn that Herald once won a contest just like this one, he serves Gamemaster so that he'll refrain from hurting his captured friends. Gamemaster points out that he always plays by the rules. In return for all that GM has gained from the contest, GM gives Robin his prize, the high-tech device known as "the Heart's Desire." It will grant any wish. Regretful Robin replies, "I wish I had my friends back."

And so it is. The Titans and all of the other heroes <APPEAR> from the ether. Gamemaster's eyes widen with fear, then rage. GM threatens Robin. The Freed Titans all fall in behind Robin, ready to battle at his side. Gamemaster knows when he's beaten. For the first time ever, he's lost a contest. "Well played..." With a wave of his hand, The Titans <VANISH>

BACK ON THE BEACH. Everyone reappears. An embarrassed Robin apologizes to everyone, they let him off the hook, they all acted kinda like jerks. Anyway, it was the prize making them do it. Doesn't matter anyway, we're all friends here. "More than that," Robin says, "We're all Titans." He gives them

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signal devices and with the approval of Cyborg and Beast Boy, makes them all Honorary Titans, on call whenever there's a danger so great that the core team cant handle it. They all clasp hands and break like a football team, about to charge the field.

TIME CUT. THE BEACH, LATER. Herald <APPEARS> with Starfire, Raven and several more FEMALE HEROES we've never seen. It's all about to happen again...

THE END