

Shego's Plan

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This idea is actually obvious enough to be mentioned in the show. Or, well, not the actual Kim/Shego parts. But the parts about the weapon, and how it should be used first. They never explore it, which is a pity, because it's an interesting concept.

Featured fandoms: Kim Possible

Featured pairings: Kim/Shego

A.S.S Story codes: ff

Story rating: PG-13

Prologue

The foot-thick solid metal doors to the mountaintop lair slid open. For a moment, nothing but fresh sea air came through them. Then, there was a voice.

"The plan would've worked just *fine*, if it hadn't been for Kim Possible and her annoying sidekick, what's his name!"

A pale blue-skinned man strode angrily through the doors. His face was set in an annoyed sneer, and he kept looking straight ahead. His coat had a slightly singed look to it.

"No, it wouldn't," another, female, voice said. "Your plans *never* work."

"They do too!" the man screamed. "They work all the time! Don't you remember that one with the... thingy, and the... whatever! That one worked!"

An athletic woman with improbably long black hair, green skin and a black-and-green catsuit walked through the door.

"The one with the thingy and the whatever'? Well, that sure narrows it down to *every plan ever!*"

The man spun around and pointed with his whole arm at the woman.

"Fine!" he shouted. "If you're so good, why don't you execute a plan of your own, Shego?"

Shego crossed her arms.

"Are you challenging me, Doctor D?" she said. "Seriously?"

Drakken crossed his arms too. He turned his face away, as if in disgust.

"Yes," he said. "Seriously."

A smile slowly took form on Shego's face. It was only a tiny little bit gloating.

"Fine," she said. "I accept."

Drakken's face snapped back to look at his presumed sidekick.

"What?" he said.

Shego's smile grew wider.

"I accept your challenge," she said. "We both start planning and executing, and in one month we see who is dominating the largest number of people, or has spread chaos and destruction over the widest area."

She put her hands on her back and leaned forward.

"Sound fair?" she said.

Drakken thought about it for a moment.

"Well, I suppose," he said.

Shego snapped back to a more normally upright position.

"Good!" she said. "See you in a month, then!"

She was out the door before Drakken had a chance to react. He remained staring at the closed doors for some time, as if not quite sure what had just happened.

"Shego?" he said. His voice echoed hollowly in the empty lair.

"Aren't you going to... help... me?"

Shego already had a plan, of course. Or, well, the basics of one. It had been there in her head ever since that time she briefly found herself working for Kim Possible's sidekick. Unlike Drakken's complicated and elaborate schemes, her plan was simplicity itself.

Step one, visit the lair of one of Team Go's old staple villains and retrieve some

blueprints. Not hard, she'd been there many times before and the villain in question was safely incarcerated.

Step two, pay a semi-reputable electronics firm a large amount of stolen money to build a device according to the blueprints. Most of the money was for the extra cost of them not asking questions or remembering ever doing the job after it was finished.

Step four was borrowing a small, almost soundless aircraft and hover with it at a position where she could see into Kim Possible's room. Specifically, where she could see Kim's bed.

Step five was the waiting. Waiting for Kim to show up and go to bed. Which, as a not inconsiderable bonus, involved watching her undress and make herself ready for the night. The girl had grown up real good, Shego had to admit, even if only to herself. For a moment, she almost wished she'd brought a camera. But only almost. A camera would've been an unnecessary complication, which went against the basic principle of planning that no supervillain ever seemed able to learn: a good plan is as simple as possible, but no simpler.

Step six of the plan came once Kim had put her lights out and enough time had passed that she was almost certainly asleep. Infra-red goggles showed clearly enough that she was still there and not moving, and it didn't really matter if she was asleep or only almost asleep. The important bit was that she not see it coming. The poor girl would never even know what hit her.

The seventh and final part was aiming and pulling the trigger.

Awakening

Morning in the Possible residence could be an interesting experience. Between her dad bringing stuff home from the Space Center, her mom leaving articles on experimental neurosurgery lying around and the twins doing their best to violate the laws of physics, it was a lively household. Add, sometimes, one young man possessing uncontrollable monkey magic and his disturbingly intelligent naked mole-rat, and, well... You usually weren't bored.

Except this morning Kim was. Really, really bored.

It was all so *trivial*.

What homework she hadn't finished the night before she'd done during breakfast, at roughly the speed she could move the pen. She must've been really tired when she returned home from the mission, because it really was incredibly easy.

She sat in front of her makeup table, looking into the mirror, thoughts racing. So many things she'd worried about yesterday suddenly seemed much less important. She couldn't really see why she'd worried so much about what Bonnie would think about her. Even if it mattered what Bonnie thought, it wouldn't be too hard to find some information that would make Bonnie really want to keep things to herself.

She wished that Wade would beep her and tell her that there was some urgent mission. At least the adrenaline rush would provide a good distraction. And maybe she'd run into Shego...

That thought led to another thought, and another sigh. The Ron situation. Which she really needed to do something about. She couldn't really remember why she'd started it in the first place, actually. She did remember it making a lot of sense at the time, but for the life of her she couldn't recall what the sense *was*. Oh well. She'd talk to him in the car on the way to school.

She picked her books up and headed out.

"Morning, KP!" Ron said as he bounced into the car.

"Mrforning!" Rufus added.

"Hi, guys," Kim said.

She put the car into drive and eased back into traffic.

"So what's up?" Ron said. "Any exciting new missions? Some nefarious plan from Drakken or someone? 'Cause I'm so there for that. Don't like it so much if it's Monkey Fist again, but I'll be there covering your back."

"Mrfonkey!" Rufus said and blew a raspberry.

"Ron," Kim said. "We need to talk."

"We need to talk?" Ron said. He looked confused. "But we are talking?"

A light went up for him.

"Oh," he said. "You mean we need to *talk*."

He turned to look at her.

"We need to talk?" he said. "What do we need to talk about?"

"Remember when we talked about having sex?" Kim said. "About waiting until after graduation and all that?"

"Yeeaaaah," Ron said. He was starting to look scared. That had not been a particularly comfortable talk for either of them. For some reason that Kim couldn't quite remember at the moment.

"And you remember when you asked if I'd slept with any guys before we got together?"

"Burned into my memory," Ron said.

"Well, I was sort of telling the truth when I said I hadn't," Kim said.

"Sort of?" Ron said. "How can you sort of tell the truth about that?"

"I haven't slept with any *guys*," Kim said. She was surprised at how easy this was. She'd expected it to be all awkward and embarrassing.

"But," she went on. "I've slept with Monique. Kinda regularly for the past year."

"With... Monique?" Ron said, obviously stunned.

Kim tried to keep her mind on the road as well as the conversation. It was kind of hard, with the other drivers making decisions so slowly and clearly not seeing the most optimal ways to drive. She had plenty of time to get bored and distracted between the times she needed to engage her brain.

"Mrfesbian?" Rufus said.

"Monique?" Kim said. "No, she's bi. That girl has a lot of love in her heart."

"And you?" Ron asked.

"Pretty much," Kim said.

Ron was pointedly not looking at her.

"How long have you known?" he said.

"Couple of years, maybe," Kim said. "I had a few really steamy dreams about Shego, and boy would I like to get *her* out of that catsuit..."

Her voice went kind of dreamy.

"So all the time we've been together," he said.

"Oh yes," Kim said. "Way longer than *that*."

"So what about us?" he said, his voice sounding as if he was on the edge of tears. "Was all that a lie?"

"No!" Kim said. "You're my best friend! It's just... a cheerleader has to have a boyfriend, or people will think she's a lesbian. And I knew that you'd never make any demands on me."

Well, that *had* been part of it for her. She hadn't ever thought about it like that before, but if she was honest with herself the non-threateningness of Ron had been a large part of why she'd gone out with him. She frowned. Why had she cared if people knew she was gay in the first place? Thinking back, there was also a vague memory of thinking that if she just got a real boyfriend maybe she'd learn to enjoy it. To be like everyone else.

"Could you please stop the car?" Ron said. "I'll, er, I'll walk the rest of the way."

"But it's just around the corner," Kim said.

"I, um, forgot my... homework," Ron said. "I'll just walk home and get it."

"Don't be silly," Kim said. "I'll drive you back. We can make it to your place and back in time for class if I don't care too much about speed limits and driving regulations."

"KP!" he screamed. "Stop the car and let me out!"

She stopped the car, neatly steering into an open space at the side of the road.

"Sheesh," she said. "All you had to do was ask."

"Come on, Rufus," he said and left.

"Hi, Wade," Kim said after she'd opened her locker door. "Any news?"

"Hi, Kim," Wade said. "Nothing. It's so slow that I even checked to see that the site is really working."

She let out a frustrated sigh. If Drakken wasn't up to something, that meant there'd be no fights with Shego. She glanced up at the picture she had taped to the inside of the locker door.

"You know, Wade," she said, "this isn't really doing much good is it?"

"What isn't?"

"The way I'm working. Getting a mission, fixing it. Getting another, fixing that one. Getting a third, and a fourth, and so on. I spend most of my time catching the same guys over and over again!"

"True," Wade said. He looked a bit confused.

"But what can we do about it?" he said. "They keep breaking out of prison all the time!"

"Wade," Kim said, "I think we need to be a bit more proactive."

"Er, okay," Wade said. "How?"

"Track down the usual villains for me. Drakken, Dementor, Killigan, Monkey Fist, the Seniors. DNAMY, the Bebes and Camille Leon if you have the time."

"On it!" Wade said, typing furiously. "What about the old Team Go villains? Like Avarius and Electronique? You've fought them too."

"Sure," Kim said. "As many as possible. Download files on them to my communicator as you compile them, okay? I need something to read in class."

Wade's eyes flickered to the side as he read something on another monitor.

"But you're having math," he said. "You usually don't want to be disturbed during math, because you need to concentrate to keep up."

Kim made a dismissive gesture.

"Eh, it was no big once I figured it out," she said.

"But you told me that yesterday!"

"It was a lot clearer this morning," she said. "Send me those files, okay?"

"Er, sure," Wade said.

"Please and thank you!" Kim said.

When the bell rang after math class, Kim stayed behind. Ron hadn't come to class at all, but that didn't worry her. He'd come around sooner or later.

"POSSIBLE!" Mr Barkin said. "WHY AREN'T YOU LEAVING WITH THE REST OF THE LEMMINGS?"

She got up from her seat and approached the teacher's desk. Mr Barkin towered over her.

"I want to talk to you for a moment," she said.

He glared down at her.

"Do you remember Miss Go?" Kim said. "You hired her to be a substitute teacher a while back."

Barkin's glare eased considerably.

"CERTAINLY," he said. "A MOST MEMORABLE YOUNG LADY."

Kim smiled at him.

"Absolutely," she said. "Say, did you do a background check on her, as mandated by the School Board?"

A glint of nervousness appeared in his eyes.

"WELL, NO," he said. "BUT I CAN'T IMAGINE A NICE WOMAN LIKE THAT TO HAVE DONE ANYTHING WRONG."

Kim's smile got a hard edge to it.

"She's wanted in eleven different countries for theft, robbery, fraud, arson, assault,

kidnapping, espionage, bribery, obstruction of justice, perjury, extortion, hijacking, piracy and murder. Among other things."

She pulled a very thick folder from her bag. On the front of it was a picture of Shego smiling and make a V sign with her fingers.

"Here's her Interpol file, in case you doubt my word," Kim said. "Now, what do you think the school board would think of you hiring an internationally wanted murderer as a teacher?"

Barkin had gone pale as a sheet.

"THE SCHOOL BOARD?" he whispered.

Kim nodded enthusiastically and smiled nicely at him.

"The school board," she said.

He was sweating and, Kim noticed, his hands had started to tremble. That was an even better reaction than she had hoped for. The man genuinely looked scared out of his wits.

"Now," she said. "I'm going to be missing school for a few days. If, when I get back, there is not a trace in any records of me being away, and all my assignments are filed with their usual A-pluses, I will be so pleased that I'll completely forget to tell the School Board about Miss Go and her Interpol file."

She abruptly stopped smiling.

"Have I made myself clear?" she said.

Mr Barkin nodded slowly.

Her smile returned.

"Good!" she said. "Have a nice day."

She headed for the door. As she was just about to leave the room, she turned around and pointed at the file the stunned Mr Barkin was holding as if it might suddenly bite him.

"Better make sure not to put that where anyone can see it," she said.

Back home in her room, Kim started to plan. She downloaded the files Wade had sent from her communicator to her desktop machine and started looking through them, taking notes on a number of sheets of paper as she went. Every now and then, she took a paper and tacked it to the wall. She then stuck nails through certain words on it, and tied pieces of string from the nails to nails on other papers.

When she'd gone through all the files, she stepped back and looked at the whole picture on the wall. She frowned. Something was missing. She took out the communicator and pressed a button. Wade appeared on the screen.

"Hey, Kim," he said. "What's up?"

"There's no file on Shego," she said.

"I know," Wade said. "That's because I can't find her."

Kim frowned.

"But there is a file on Drakken," she said. "It says he's collecting pieces for an army of... what was it..."

She bent forward and read from the paper with "DRAKKEN" written across the top.

"...BattleWarMechBots," she said. "Whatever those are. Anyway, shouldn't she be with him? She's his sidekick, after all."

Wade shrugged.

"She isn't," he said. "I have him and his henchmen on video, but no Shego. What's even stranger is that her credit cards haven't been used in almost a week. It's as if she

vanished off the face of the Earth."

Kim raised an eyebrow.

"Where were her credit cards last used?" she said.

Wade typed at insane speed for a few moments, then peered at his monitor.

"Boca Raton, Seattle and Tokyo. Live uses, within minutes of each other," he said.

He frowned.

"Hey!" he said. "She's hiding from *us*!"

Rather than annoyance, a swell of pride rose in Kim. Of course Shego would be the one of all her foes to actually be a challenge.

"All right," she said to Wade, smiling. "Stop looking for Shego. If she has had a week to hide, we're not going to find her. Concentrate on the others. And Wade?"

"Yes, Kim?"

"Could you send me the blueprints for the battlesuit?"

"I guess," Wade said, looking surprised. "What do you want with them?"

Kim shrugged.

"No reason. Just want a look."

"Sure," he said. "They'll be in your computer in ten seconds."

"Thank you!"

She switched the communicator off and turned to the wall full of papers again. Wade had, as usual, given her what she wanted rather than what she asked for. There was information on every villain she'd ever fought with. Well, except one. Which *was* annoying, she'd counted on being able to use Shego's help. Well, that couldn't be helped. She'd find something else. Carefully, she took down the paper labeled "SHEGO" and rearranged a few pieces of string.

Pleased with the overall picture again, she turned to the computer and the battlesuit blueprints. She did need to use her books and some net searches to figure out the meaning of some of the symbols used, but it turned out to be much easier to understand than she had hoped. With some work and the tweeps' tools she should be able to fix the bugs in the suit.

She looked at the clock. Almost midnight. Not too bad. A couple of hours to fix the suit. Another hour to 'borrow' some equipment from her mom. That still left time for a few hours sleep before she needed to get up and catch a ride.

Smiling, she bent down over the battlesuit blueprints. Tomorrow she would take the fight to the villains.

Doctor Drakken was in a foul mood. He hadn't really realised how big a help the vicious and foulmouthed Shego had actually been. Just her threatening presence had served to keep the henchmen in line and working hard. But now? There was nothing but complaining, laziness and mistakes. At this rate, he'd never be able to win the bet with Shego.

"Aaargh!" he groaned.

He paced back and forth across the large laboratory, swerving around the half-assembled BattleWarMechBot in the middle of it. The stupid thing wasn't working right. Physically it was fine, as far as he could tell, but for some reason the weapons-control AI only wanted to discuss the implications of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. He was just about to give the CPU module a good hard kick when he saw something moving out of the corner of his eye. He spun around.

"Who's there?" he shouted.

Something moved again. This time he caught a female-shaped silhouette before it

vanished out of sight.

"Shego?" he said. "Is that you?"

He put his hands threateningly on his hips and scowled.

"Have you come to spy on my plan?" he said. "Is that it?"

"Guess again," a voice said. A voice he knew far too well. His scowl was instantly replaced with surprise and quite a bit of fear.

"Kim Possible?" he said the moment before the sole of a battlesuit boot impacted on his head.

When he woke up again, Doctor Drakken found himself securely strapped to the dentist's chair he kept in the lab exactly for the purpose of strapping people to. Not that he'd actually *done* that, but you had to have one if you wanted to get any respect as a supervillain.

It seemed that the chair had been modified. Something was holding his head in place. Very firmly in place. It didn't use to have anything to do that. Also, he discovered when he tried moving his head, he had no feeling in his scalp.

"Welcome back to consciousness, Doctor Drakken," a female voice said. Kim Possible's voice. From behind.

"Er, hello?" he said, trying to swivel his eyeballs far enough to see through the back of his head.

"I suppose you're wondering what's going on," Kim said.

Actually, he'd been too busy being scared to think about that.

"Kim?" he said. "What are you doing?"

Steps. Slowly, she came into view. She was dressed in her white battlesuit, with a white doctor's coat over it. She had her hair in a net, surgical gloves on her hands and a face mask pulled down to her chin. She was holding a scalpel. A bloody scalpel. Next to her was a trolley full of medical equipment.

"We're going to be doing a bit of brain surgery, Doctor," she said.

"Brain surgery?" he said. His voice sounded weak even to himself.

"Well, skull surgery, to be exact," Kim said. She reached up and turned on a video monitor. It flickered to life, and Drakken could see himself from above. His head had been shaved, the scalp neatly sliced open and pulled apart with clamps. The skull could easily be seen, red-stained and wetly glistening.

"Here," Kim said. "Watch. I don't want you to have the slightest doubt about this."

"About what?" Drakken croaked. Involuntarily, he was trying to watch both the grisly image on the monitor and Kim at the same time.

Kim picked something up from a steel tray on the trolley. She held it up so he could see. It was a small plastic cylinder, about an inch long and half as thick.

"This is a radio-controlled blast cap for chemical explosives," Kim said. "I nicked it from my brothers. I think they use it for separating stages in chemical rockets, but never mind. Its job is to explode violently, providing sufficient heat and shock to start a chemical chain reaction in a high explosive compound."

She carefully put it back on the tray.

"I'm going to open up your skull," she said. "On the inside of the piece I remove, I will carve out a hollow large enough for that charge. With the charge in place, I will put the piece of bone back and fasten it with medical glue. I'll suture your scalp back together again. I know how to do this. I watched my mom do it during mother-daughter day at the hospital. Well, not the implanting a bomb, but opening the skull and closing it again. You'll heal."

"Good," Drakken whispered. "Healing is good."

"Doctor Drakken?" Kim said. "Can you imagine what will happen to your brain if that charge goes off inside your skull?"

He tried to nod. When that didn't work, he croaked an affirmative.

"Good," Kim said. "That brings us to the question of when it might go off."

Drakken could hear himself whimpering.

"You are evil," Kim said. "You have proven that over and over again. You're a threat to the world, and you don't deserve to live."

She leaned closer.

"And after this, if I don't like what you're doing, you will very, very quickly and finally stop living. Am I making myself clear?"

He didn't manage to get anything understandable out, but Kim seemed to accept that as an answer. She stood up straight.

"Well, then," she said. "Let's get started."

She picked up a medical power drill from the trolley and experimentally spun the bit a couple of times.

Drakken fainted.

Kim looked down at the unconscious blue-skinned man. When she was sure he wasn't trying to fake it, she used the drill to make four small indentations in the bone of his skull.

She didn't actually want to open up his head. She wanted him to use his brain for her benefit, and he couldn't do that if Kim turned him into a vegetable. But she wanted him to think that the little bomb was in there. After her little performance, and with the added details of 'holes' in his cranium he'd be able to feel with his fingers when his scalp had healed, he would be very sure that he had a bomb in his head.

She smiled as she made the sutures. Imagine that it had taken her this long to figure out how to turn people like Drakken into useful citizens! All these mad scientists and super-powered villains, they weren't problems to be eradicated. They were resources to be exploited. She laughed a little to herself. A problem is just an opportunity in disguise indeed!

She made the last knot in the final suture. There. Some antiseptic cream, some compresses and in a week or so he'd be as good as new. Well, apart from the hair. And as soon as he was awake and somewhat coherent, he'd start helping her get the other villains under control. Oh yes. She had it all planned out. Drakken took some time, but that was because she was working alone. The more of them she got, the speedier the process would get.

It wouldn't be long before she'd caught them all.

World Domination For Dummies

Shego felt good. She'd spent two weeks camping in Alaska, hundreds of miles away from the nearest human settlement, and it had done small miracles for her mood. She'd managed to fly all the way from Anchorage to Middleton without even once wanting to kill someone. Not even the children. Sure, she was pining for a steaming hot bath and a gourmet meal, but those were small things.

That she had enjoyed it so much came as a surprise to her. Usually, her idea of an ideal vacation was lounging at an exclusive resort with easy access to every luxury known to mankind. The closest things to luxuries she'd had out in the wilderness were a freezing cold lake and a bottle of good Jamaican rum. Unless, of course, she counted the blessed peace and quiet as a luxury. Which she was now inclined to do. Also, as a hiding place it had pretty much rocked.

But now she was back in the normal world. She sighed a little. Oh well. If nothing else she'd get to find out how her little scheme had worked, which she was pretty much dying to know. Although dying in a placid, unstressed sort of way. She ambled over to the cafeteria in the middle of the arrivals hall, and grabbed a large cup of coffee, a lox bagel and a newspaper. She sipped the coffee, unfolded the paper on the table in front of her and promptly sprayed coffee all over it.

'President Drakken Introduces 2000% Energy Tax,' the headline said. Under it was a picture of Drakken standing at the White House press conference podium. In a suit. With a proper, if very short, haircut.

For several seconds Shego just sat staring at it with her mouth hanging open. *President Drakken?* The idiot had actually gone and succeeded? When she wasn't there?

She frowned. No. It just wasn't possible. It was just barely on the very extreme edge of possibility that he'd be lucky enough that one of his harebrained schemes would put him in a position of power over the nation, but not as a bona fide president. There just was no way. And an energy tax? What was that all about? She got up and walked over to the cashier's desk, paper in hand.

"Excuse me," she said, "but I've been out in the wilderness for a while, and this paper says there is a new president?"

The girl behind the desk smacked her chewing gum before she answered.

"Yeah," she said. "Since last week."

"Just like that?" Shego said. "No election, no nothing?"

"I dunno," the girl said. "I only watch the soaps."

So much for the not wanting to kill people.

"Do you have papers from the last few days?" Shego asked.

"No," the girl said without even looking.

Shego gave up. She returned to her cooling coffee and started looking through the paper. Maybe there was something more to be found.

There was.

Apparently Europe had a president now, in spite of not even having been a nation when Shego boarded the plane to Alaska. A president by the name of Duff Killigan. Russia had a new president too, by the name of Dementor. China had Monkey Fist. India, Señor Senior Sr. The list went on.

Shego stared at the paper. While she was gone, something had gone *seriously*

weird. Like, Twilight Zone kind of weird. She tried to imagine how this could have happened in only two weeks, but came up totally blank. But there was one phrase that snuck into her mind and refused to leave. A phrase that she'd used to consider cocky and kind of cute, but that suddenly sounded pretty damn scary.

She can do anything.

Fortunately the new President of the United States was protected by the Secret Service, so it only took Shego a couple of hours to figure out where he was and how to get in.

It certainly helped that the place he was in was his old lair, and nobody had bothered to change the codes.

What also helped was that Drakken apparently hadn't even let the Secret Service people into the lair. The place was deserted. Not even the henchmen seemed to be around. With every sense she had tuned to maximum alertness, Shego sneaked through the corridors towards the central lab. According to the lair computer system, that was the only place where the lights were turned on, so it seemed reasonable that that was where she could find Drakken.

Or that that was where the trap was set.

For the last bit she abandoned the corridor entirely and crawled through the air vents. The same air vents that she'd time after time tried to convince Drakken to change to some that people couldn't crawl through, but always been turned down on the silly grounds that a proper supervillain's lair should have them. She was not unaware of the irony.

Doctor Drakken was sitting in a chair in the middle of the laboratory. The view through the vent's grille wasn't very good, so she couldn't quite see what he was doing, but it sounded like he was crying.

Well, if she hadn't already been convinced that something was deeply wrong that sure would've done it.

She fished a screwdriver out of a catsuit pocket. A plastic one, so as not to make noise if dropped. She stifled a groan over the security insanity that was an air vent grille that could be unscrewed from *both* sides and set to remove it. It had a convenient little handle to reduce the risk of dropping it out of the vent while removing it, and the vent itself had a special indentation to store it in.

To imagine that she had even for a *moment* harbored the thought that someone with a mindset like that might have forced his way to the presidency!

She vaulted out of the vent and dropped soundlessly to the laboratory floor.

"Doctor D?" she said.

Drakken turned his head. It certainly looked like he'd been crying.

"Shego?" he said. "Is that really you?"

"The one and only," she said. "What's the deal here, Drak? I'm hearing some insane stuff about you being president."

He hadn't just been crying, it looked like he'd been scared halfway into another incarnation and pretty much stayed there. Not that he looked very healthy at the best of times, with the blue skin and all, but at the moment he really looked like death warmed over.

"She made us *cooperate*, Shego," he said. His voice was hoarse. "She made us work together to build... *things*."

Shego looked around. They were alone in the lab, as far as she could see.

"By 'she' I suppose you mean Kim Possible?" Shego said.

Drakken nodded frantically.

"I don't know what happened to her," he said. "She's not like she used to be. She's *evil*. Much, much worse than I ever was."

"Okay, calm down," Shego said. "What did she do to you?"

She suddenly noticed that there was a fresh cross-shaped scar on the top of his head.

"She put a bomb in my head, Shego," he said. "She put a *bomb* in my *head*."

She didn't know what to say. She felt faintly sick, but that was hard to put into words.

"If I don't do as she says, she'll blow it," Drakken said. "She said that I deserve to die for my crimes, but as long as I'm useful I can live to try to make up for them."

She stayed silent. Suggestions on how to fix the problem appeared to her, but she had a strong feeling that they wouldn't help Drakken's mental state. And Kim had certainly thought about them too anyway.

"Dementor has one too," Drakken said. "I don't know what she did to Amy, but she's been a total wreck ever since. She can still work, though. She made an Ebola strain tailored to Monkey Fist's DNA. If he doesn't get the antidote every day, he'll start releasing a virus that will kill him along with every monkey on Earth. Dementor made something for Junior that makes him look like the Elephant Man if he disobeys, and that pretty much keeps Senior under control too."

He sounded a little less desperate now, as if the confession was a relief to him. Shego, on the other hand, was feeling increasingly horrified.

"I made molebots," he said. "Nuclear molebots. If Killigan steps out of line, the hundred oldest and best golf courses in Scotland go up in mushroom clouds."

"So what about the presidencies?" Shego said. "It sounds like she's got puppets controlling most of the world's governments."

Drakken rubbed his eyes.

"Most of us had dabbled in mind control," he said. "My shampoo and things like that. When she forced us to cooperate..."

His voice trailed off.

Again, Shego didn't know what to say.

"We have to stop her, Shego," Drakken said. "I and the others may have done a lot of very bad things, but Kim Possible is a *monster*. I don't care if I die in the process, but she must be stopped!"

He had turned fully towards Shego, and was gesturing imploringly at her as he talked. A couple of steps behind him was one of the lab's control consoles. Too far away for him to have been working on it, as well as powered down. Her heart sank.

"Doctor D," she said. "What were you doing when I dropped in?"

He looked confused.

"Doing?" he said. "Nothing. She told me to go sit here."

So it was a trap. Kim had known she was coming all along. Shego rapidly looked around, trying to figure out where it would be coming from.

Only a step behind Drakken Kim Possible faded into view as her battlesuit's chameleon circuits deactivated.

"Hello, Shego," she said.

Drakken started so badly that he fell out of his chair.

"I didn't do anything!" he screamed. "I did just as you said! Please don't blow up my brain!"

Kim ignored him.

"Kimmie," Shego said. "I hear you've gone into the world domination business."

Her mouth was going on automatic. Kim looked *fantastic*. On the surface she looked the same as always, of course. Which was very far from bad to start with. She'd always been very self-confident, too. Which was also attractive. But this time there was something more. Something that Shego couldn't quite put her finger on, but whatever it was it was turning her on like crazy.

"I've been waiting for you, Shego," Kim said. The way she said her name sent shivers down Shego's spine.

"Sorry to disappoint, Princess," she said. "I came as soon as I heard something was up."

Drakken had crawled off to the side, obviously not wanting to be between them.

"That's all right," Kim said. "You're here now."

"Sure am," Shego said. She'd never noticed before that Kim's eyes were almost exactly the same shade of green as her own.

"I have an opening for an assistant," Kim said. "If you're interested."

"Assistant?" Shego said. "Don't you mean sidekick?"

Kim shrugged.

"We could call it that, if you want."

"What is it you're doing, anyway?" Shego asked. "Doctor D here told me some, as I guess you heard, but I'm drawing a blank on the big picture."

She was going to accept Kim's offer almost no matter what, she suddenly realised. She wanted badly to be near that girl. Or, really, she wanted a lot more than just be near, but she guessed that wasn't in the cards. She'd seen enough of the boys Kim drooled after to understand that. But she'd settle for near. The physical frustration she could deal with. There were plenty of pretty young women who weren't very particular as long as you had lots of cash to spread around. She probably could even find some who looked more or less like Kim.

"I'm saving the world, of course," Kim said. "Nobody else is doing it, so I'll just have to do it for them."

"Saving the world," Shego said.

"Our lifestyle isn't sustainable," Kim said. "We know that perfectly well. Things are already changing for the worse, in the climate and other places. As the large masses of people in China and India come wanting the same standard of living that we have, things will only get worse faster."

Shego knew this, of course. She'd even donated pretty serious amounts of money to Greenpeace and similar organisations. If nothing else, she didn't want her favourite seaside resorts under fifteen feet of water.

"People won't change voluntarily until it's already too late," Kim said. "So I'm going to make them change now."

"Right," Shego said. "That makes sense. I guess. And you want me in this to do what, exactly?"

Kim shrugged.

"There'll be plenty to do for an enforcer and highly skilled thief," she said. Her gaze travelled slowly down Shego's body.

"There may be other... opportunities, too," she said.

For a moment, there was a complete standstill in Shego's head. She must have imagined seeing that. There was no way that Kim Possible had just flirted with her. But if she *had*...

"So, um," she said, inwardly cursing herself for stumbling over her words, "what

kind of payment are we talking about here?"

Kim smiled.

"You like spas and luxury resorts, right?" she said.

"Who doesn't?" Shego said.

"I'm thinking that you could get the Bahamas," Kim said. "You'd have to abide by global regulations on energy use and emission control, but that should still leave a mindboggling amount of luxury if it all went to just one person."

For the second time in the same conversation, Shego found herself speechless. She'd been mentally preparing herself for being offered a staggering amount of money and preparing to demand more, but this was quite something else.

"What do you mean 'get'?" she said.

"Yours to do what you want with. President. Queen. Dictator for life. Whatever you want to call it."

Kim smiled at her.

"You know I can deliver," she said. "And you won't get a better offer anywhere else."

"But, um," Shego said, "wouldn't I have to spend a lot of time and effort to keep rebellions and such down?"

"Oh no," Kim said. "After we're done, everyone will be perfectly willing to obey your slightest whim."

Part of her just wanted to scream "Hell yes!" and go for it. Undisputed ruler of a paradisaical tropical archipelago? Not a deal you were offered every day.

On the other hand, an annoying part of her pointed out, you'll be putting yourself in the company of Saddam Hussein, Pol Pot, Idi Amin and people like that. Except worse, because they only enslaved people's bodies and it sounds like Kim is planning to enslave people's *minds*. You may have left the superhero gig to be a mercenary villain, but are you really prepared to do *that*?

On the third hand, her instinct for self-preservation said, turning this chick down would probably be an extremely bad move, considered from a wanting-to-stay-alive point of view. And possibly from a wishing-we-were-dead point of view.

Out of the corner of her eye, she could see Drakken cower against a computer rack.

"Sure, Kimmie," she said. "I'm in."

Kim smiled at her.

"Welcome aboard," she said.

Kim was staying at a hotel in Upperton, it turned out. She'd taken over the entire top floor, most of which was used as offices and laboratories. It was all temporary, she said. A more permanent base was under construction, in the form of an airship two miles long. It'd cruise at very high altitude, get its power from super-efficient solar cells covering its topside and never land. It would be, Kim claimed, the most energy-efficient form of transport ever built. Once it was airborne, it would only need to take aboard food. All water would be recycled, and there would be a significant amount of hydroponic gardens. Kim said that the thing was partly inspired by the Biosphere projects, and that she hoped to eventually get it entirely self-sufficient.

It would also be a highly visible symbol of power. Kim didn't say that, but Shego supposed that was just because it was kind of obvious.

But that was the future. The present was a hotel room. Well, suite, actually. Still very modest for someone who had forced herself into a position of power over roughly four billion people in two weeks time. It had felt strange walking through the

hotel to get there. The working parts of the top floor had a lot of people in them, and nobody had even looked at Shego as they walked past. All eyes had been either aimed at Kim, or averted. In either case, there had been enough fear involved to make them completely ignore the shapely green-skinned woman in the figure-hugging suit.

Being ignored was not something that happened to Shego a lot. It unnerved her.

Kim sat down in the middle of a large couch and spread her arms along the backrest.

"So, Shego," she said. "What have you been up to lately?"

She was so close to blurting out "Hitting you with the ray from Electronique's modified Attitudinator", but managed to stop herself in time. She had no idea if saying that would get her a bonus or killed, but she didn't feel like taking the gamble.

"Oh, nothing much," she said, still standing. "Spent the last two weeks camping in Alaska."

"Alone?"

"Just me and the grizzlies," Shego said. "And, well, a gazillion mosquitoes."

There was an uncomfortable silence.

"So," Shego said without thinking first, "what have you been up to yourself?"

Kim giggled a little.

"Taking over the world," she said.

"Oh," Shego said. "Of course. I knew that."

"It hasn't left much time for anything else," Kim said. "I had to skip cheerleading practice, and I think I missed a Latin test."

Shego sat down in an armchair. Everything felt surreal. In all her time with Drakken, she'd never really thought about what it might be like if one of his schemes ever succeeded. Perhaps because that happening was so incredibly unlikely. Or, more likely, because it was actually a pretty frightening prospect. Even if you were almost at the top of the new order.

"Why don't you come sit here?" Kim said, nodding towards the spot on the couch next to herself. She was looking at Shego with a definite come-hither look.

Shego swallowed. Kim *was* flirting with her. Might the Attitudinator have turned her gay as well as evil? Shego hoped not, because she did not like the implications of that one little bit.

"I, um," Shego said, "just thought I should keep a respectful distance. Not get into your personal space. Now that you're my boss and all."

While she talked, Kim unzipped her battle suit and pulled the top half down to her waist. Under it, she was wearing a thin white tank top. Only a thin white tank top. Shego could clearly see Kim's nipples poking at the fabric. She swallowed again, in spite of her mouth having gone all dry.

"Let's say that when we're in this room, we're equals," Kim said. "And I kind of want you in my personal space."

"I'm starting to get that," Shego said. "And it sounds really tempting, but I came here straight from two weeks in the woods, a really long flight and crawling through the air vents in Drakken's lair. Without ever passing through a shower, bath or, lately, bed. So, um, rain check? Until I am a little less tired and a lot less ripe?"

Kim pouted a little.

"I guess I'll have to accept that," she said. "But on one condition."

"Condition?" Shego said.

"Come and give me a kiss," Kim said. "To tide me over."

Shego didn't dare deny that. Nor, if she was honest to herself, did she really want

to. Kissing Kim Possible had been high on her list of things she wanted to do some day for a pretty long time now.

She got up, walked the few steps over to the couch and sat down next to Kim. Kim put her hand gently on Shego's cheek and guided their mouths together. The kiss was slow, gentle and almost broke Shego's heart.

"You weren't kidding about being pretty ripe," Kim said after they'd separated again. "Your room is two doors up the corridor. If it's not as you like it, call down to reception and tell them that if they don't fix it very quickly I will be disappointed."

Shego stood up, the feels of Kim's lips on her own still echoing in her mind.

"Thanks," she said. "Er, see you tomorrow?"

"Bright and early," Kim said. "We have a lot of work ahead of us."

As Shego was on her way out through the door, she turned and looked back at Kim. She had picked up a laptop and was typing at it.

"Kim?" she said.

Kim looked up at her.

"If you make most of the people in the western world live at a much lower standard than they're used to, don't you think they'll be pissed off? Try to revolt and such? Even if we can easily put down one riot or control one country, there will be a lot of riots in a lot of countries."

"No, silly," Kim said. "Forcing them to do it would never work. We're going to make everybody *want* to. We're going to make saving the environment everybody's deepest desire, forever after."

Shego's room turned out to be larger and fancier than Kim's. It had a panoramic view of Upperton, a bed that could easily accommodate a medium-sized orgy, every kind of entertainment electronics she'd ever heard of and a mini-bar that really didn't merit the prefix 'mini'. The bathroom had so many functions and settings that she needed to read the manual in order to turn the shower on. Once she'd got it working in a way that wasn't horrible, she undressed, got in, sank to the floor and buried her head in her hands.

This was *not* what she had imagined when she hovered outside Kim's window, waiting to hit her with the Attitudinator. She'd imagined Kim on their side. One of them. A friend instead of the strange kind of enemy she used to be.

She'd certainly not imagined *this*. This wasn't Kim Possible. This was a monster that looked like her, talked with her voice and used the same sandalwood-scented bath soap. This was, she really had to admit, a terrible mistake. One, she was starting to realise, she would have to undo. Somehow. The non-evil Kim had been hard enough to beat. This version? Might not be doable at all. But she had to try, even if it meant that she'd wake up with a bomb in her skull, or whatever fate Kim could come up with to terrify all sense out of her. Drakken might not have been Shego's favorite person in the world, but what Kim had done to him was just wrong.

She got out of the shower and stood naked in the darkness of her sumptuous room. She could have all this. Permanently. She could have even better than this, for as long as she lived.

She picked up her suit and burned the grime out of it with her comet fire. She sat down on the bed and pulled the now clean suit on. Once dressed, she walked out on the balcony. If it was still called a balcony when it was almost big enough to play volleyball on. She looked down. There was a pool down there, twenty-eight stories below. It would do.

So, instead of a life in luxury she was going to piss off the world's most powerful person, live in hiding and try to fight against overwhelming force. All in order to save the entire world from being brainwashed.

She aimed carefully and then somersaulted over the balcony railing, straightening out into a straight dive.

Some poor excuse for a supervillain she was.

Resistance

Wade squinted against the sunshine. He wasn't used to the bright outdoors light, and it hurt his eyes. If this was going to become a habit, he'd have to buy a pair of sunglasses.

He was standing in the street in front of the Stoppable residence, having just stepped out of a taxi. For two weeks now he hadn't been able to get hold of either Kim or Ron, and he was seriously worried. Something was badly wrong, and not only things like Doctor Drakken becoming President. He'd spoken to the doctors Possible a couple of times, and they didn't know anything. They were, as much as people like them could, falling apart with worry. Apparently, Kim had just walked out the door one morning and never returned. Even the tweebs seemed unusually subdued.

But he hadn't been able to get hold of Ron or his parents. Or, and he had felt very silly for even trying, Rufus. So eventually he'd decided to leave his room and try to physically visit Ron.

"Hello, Mr Stoppable," he said when Ron's dad opened the door. "I'm Wade. Is Ron in?"

"Oh!"

Mr Stoppable adjusted his glasses.

"Well, yes, I guess he is," he said. "But I'm not sure if he wants to see anyone. He's been really down since Kim broke up with him."

Wade's eyebrows rose.

"*Kim* broke up with him?!"

He frowned. This just kept getting stranger.

"Look, Mr Stoppable, I really need to talk to Ron. Kim is missing. She's been gone for more than two weeks already, and I can't find a trace of her. Maybe Ron knows something."

Mr Stoppable looked down at Wade for a few moments.

"Okay then," he said and stepped aside to let Wade in. "He's up in his room."

"Thank you," Wade said, as he hurried up the stairs. He wasn't really sure why he was hurrying, since this had been going on for a couple of weeks already, but he had a feeling that he ought to.

Ron's room was a mess. Take-out cartons and dirty plates in various states of decay were all over the place. Dirty clothes were tossed here and there. It smelled, to put it charitably, lived in. Ron himself lay on the bed staring at the ceiling. Rufus was sitting on the desk, playing a portable video game with all four feet.

"Hey, Ron," Wade said. "Er, your dad let me in."

"Did he now."

Ron's voice sounded kind of... dead.

Wade looked around for somewhere to sit, but didn't find anything he really wanted to touch without a biohazard suit, so he remained standing.

"He said Kim dumped you," he said.

"Oh, she did," Ron said. "In the car, on our way to school."

This time a smidgen of emotion could be detected.

"Just like that?" Wade asked.

"Just like that," Ron said.

"But... why?"

"She got tired of lying to me and cheating on me," Ron said.

This time there was definite feeling in his voice. Anger and resentment, yes, but still feeling.

"She *cheated* on you?" Wade said. "*Kim cheated on you?*"

"Yup," Ron said. "She said so herself."

Wade was increasingly getting a feeling that he'd taken a wrong turn somewhere and ended up in bizarro-world.

"With who?" he said, because from what he knew of Kim's life, which was a lot, there hadn't been much room for cheating.

"Monique," Ron said.

Okay, that worked, in a practical kind of way. She and Kim sure had spent a lot of time together, both on and off work. It still didn't make sense, though.

"Aren't Monique seeing Felix?" Wade said.

"Yeeeah," Ron drawled. "The guy with no sensation or motor control below his waist. Fancy that."

Maybe he'd understand this when he was older. He suspected not, but one could always hope.

"Ron," he said in an attempt to change the subject. "Kim is missing. Nobody's seen her for nineteen days now."

"So she dumped you too, huh," Ron said.

Wade sighed.

"No, she didn't 'dump' me," he said. "She's *gone*. Nobody's seen her. Not her family, not Monique, not the security cameras at school. And Mr Barkin has been faking the attendance records to make it look like she's been there."

That actually made Ron sit up and look at him.

"*Mr Barkin* has been faking official school record?" he said. "The world record holder in being a stickler for rules has been breaking the rules?"

"Told you something weird was going on," Wade said.

Ron frowned.

"No, you didn't," he said.

Wade rewinded the conversation in his head.

"Okay," he said. "So I didn't. But something weird *is* going on."

"Yeah," Ron said, and now he sounded hopeful. "The Kim I've known since pre-K would never have dumped me like that. If she dumped me at all, she'd have been extremely nice about it."

He frowned.

"Maybe it wasn't Kim!" he said. "Maybe she's been kidnapped and someone made a robot copy to cover it up! And I've been moping in my room while KP needed rescuing!"

He jumped off the bed.

"Okay, Wade," he said. "I'm with you. Where do we go and what do we do?"

Rufus left his game, jumped onto Ron's shoulder and beat his chest with his fore-paws.

"I haven't got a clue," Wade said.

Ron and Rufus stared at him.

"*You* don't have a clue?" Ron said.

Wade shook his head.

"Absolutely nothing," he said. "The last trace I have is her car passing a toll camera

by the on-ramp to the highway to Lowerton. After that, complete blank."

Ron frowned.

"What would she be doing in Lowerton?" he said. "If that was her at all, that is."

Wade spread his hands in a beats-me gesture.

"I need to think," Ron said. "Rufus, Wade, follow me."

Wade looked on in horror as Rufus stuffed himself with a Naco bigger than he was.

"This is how you think?" he said. "Going to Bueno Nacho?"

Ron smiled.

"Ooh yeah," he said. "It's served me well for many years."

"Uh-hu," Wade said, clearly not convinced. "And what have you got so far?"

"Squat," Ron said. "But it will come, don't you fear. The Zen of the Grande Size is strong."

As if on cue, Rufus spit out a folded piece of paper and made repeated gagging noises. Ron took the paper.

"See?" he said.

He unfolded it and started reading out loud.

"We need to talk," he read. "Meet me in the black BMW with tinted windows parked behind Bueno Nacho. Signed, Shego."

Ron frowned.

"Shego?" he said. "That's got to be a trap. Maybe she and Drakken were the ones who got to Kim, and now they want us too."

"Nah," Wade said, still mostly stunned from the ridiculously well-timed and unlikely find. "If it was Drakken, he'd only need to send in the FBI to grab us."

Ron stared at him.

"Okay," he said. "Run that by me again. Drakken would send in *who* to get us?"

"The Feds," Wade said. "He's the president, after all."

Ron stared blankly at Wade for a few moments.

"Maybe I should've paid attention to the news, huh?" he said.

"Maybe you should have," Wade said. "I suggest we go out back and see if Shego is there. If she wants to see us without Drakken knowing about it, that's more than odd enough to follow up on."

"Okay," Ron said. "I'll just get some Nacos to go."

There was indeed a black BMW with tinted windows parked behind the Bueno Nacho. As they came close, the driver's door opened. Behind the wheel was Shego, uncharacteristically wearing a dull brown trenchcoat, black glasses and a fedora.

"Get in quick," she said. "I don't know how long we have before she spots us."

Ron and Rufus looked at Wade. Wade looked at Ron and Rufus. Then they all moved into the back seat. Ron had hardly even closed the door when Shego accelerated away with screaming tires.

"Hang on," Shego said. "And don't talk. She might be listening."

"Um, Shego," Ron started saying.

"Ah!" Shego said. "No talking!"

Ron shut up. There wasn't much room for chatting anyway. Shego was driving like, well, a supervillain. And, he realised as he looked at her, a very nervous supervillain. She kept looking in all directions, changing direction abruptly while they were under bridges, taking strange detours across parks and generally doing everything imaginable to throw off pursuit. Except he couldn't see any pursuit, and she only rarely

looked backwards. Mostly, she kept throwing glances upwards.

In a parking garage in downtown Upperton, she stopped the car next to what looked like an old beat-up van. She took a little black box out of her pocket and pressed a recessed button on it. The van's side door slid open.

"Get out of the car and into the other one," she said. "And don't step on the ground!"

After another brief three-way look, Ron, Rufus and Wade carefully made their way over to the van. When they were in it, Shego did the same, except she went for the van's driver's seat. She drove a few meters away, then leaned out the window and used her green flames to reduce the BMW to a burnt-out wreck.

"I think we can talk now," she said as she drove out of the garage and down into the tunnel under the river. "At least as long as we've got solid cover above."

"Um," Ron said. "Who are we hiding from?"

Shego looked grim.

"Kim," she said.

"No, see," he said, "you've got that wrong. Kim is our friend, who is missing."

"Really," Shego said. "Did she seem very friendly the last time you talked to her?"

Ron's face fell.

"That wasn't Kim," he tried to convince himself.

"What did she say?" Shego asked.

"She dumped me," Ron said.

Shego nodded.

"And I'm guessing she wasn't very nice about it?"

"No," Ron said.

"You know what's going on, don't you?" Wade said. "You know what's happened to Kim."

Shego was silent for a moment.

"Yes," she said. "I do."

"So spill!" Ron said.

"About a month ago," Shego said, "you and Kim foiled yet another of Drakken's hopeless schemes, remember?"

Ron, Wade and Rufus all nodded.

"When we got back to the lair, I kind of goaded Drakken into a bet," Shego said. "About who of us could cause the most chaos, destruction and mayhem."

"That's horrible!" Ron said. "How could you do such a thing?"

Shego looked at him in the rear view mirror.

"Um, because we're supervillains?" she said.

"Oh, right," Ron said. "I forgot. Carry on."

"Anyway," she went on, "Drakken went and stole some experimental autonomous war machines called BattleWarMechBots. Which he never even managed to activate."

Shego paused and licked her lips.

"I, for my part, hit Kim Possible with an Attitudinator ray, then went and hid in the Alaskan wilderness," she said.

For a few moments, all that could be heard in the van was the sounds the car made as it hurtled along the tunnel.

"Nrevil Kimf?" Rufus said.

"Why would you do such a thing?" Wade said.

"Look," Shego said. "If you wanted to cause as much chaos, mayhem and destruc-

tion as possible, can you think of a better way to do it than to turn Kim Possible evil?"

"Did it work?" Ron said.

Shego glared at him through the mirror.

"*Drakken* is President of the United States of America," she said. "What do you think, computer boy?"

She sighed.

"It worked *much* too well," she said. "The first thing she did was force all her usual enemies to work for her. Even as we speak, *Drakken*, *Dementor*, *DNAmy*, *Electronique* and the *Mathter* are working together to design and build a fleet of mind-control satellites. *Killigan* and the *Seniors* are buying up every shred of launch capacity there is to be had. Which is pretty easy, considering that one or another of them rules all the countries in the world with any space launch capability at all."

She paused for a moment.

"In three days," she said. "The satellites launch. A few hours after that, the only people on the planet with any free will left will be the ones aboard Kim's sky fortress."

"Okay," Ron said. "That sounds kind of bad."

"Why is she doing it?" Wade said. "Even if she's evil, I can't really see her wanting to rule the world just because."

There was another sigh from Shego.

"She thinks she's saving the world," she said. "Her plan is to make *everyone*, all six and a half billion people on the planet, want to live an environmentally sustainable lifestyle. We'll be a planet of fucking Amish."

"That doesn't sound all that bad," Ron said. "Well, apart from the mass mind control."

"Um," Wade said. "Production capacity?"

"Computer boy got it in one," Shego said. "The sustainable population for the kind of technology level we're looking at here is somewhere around one billion. So for Kim's plan to work, over five billion people need to die."

"And," she added, "you can forget about *Bueno Nacho*. Actually, I suspect that you *will* forget about it whether you want to or not, as soon as the satellites are turned on."

"Kim is going to kill *Bueno Nacho*?" Ron said.

"Kim is going to kill *five billion people*?" Wade said.

"Sort of," Shego said. "She'll make everyone want five billion people to die. I'm sure she'll make people want it all to proceed in a very orderly and civilized fashion."

Wade looked horrified.

"We have to stop her," he said.

"Well, duh!" Ron said. "*Nobody* messes with *Bueno Nacho*! Not even Kim!"

"Glad to hear you're aboard with the preventing genocide, kids," Shego said. "I have the *Attitudinator* in a lockup in *Lowerton*, so all we have to do is get a clear shot with it at Kim. Let's go somewhere and plan."

Kim stood on the roof of *Drakken's* old lair and looked on as her airship was being loaded with equipment and supplies. This close, the thing was so big that the mind refused to entirely accept it. Two miles long, half a mile wide and nearly as tall, it was by far the largest object that had ever flown. And under her leadership, it had been designed and built in under two weeks.

She only wished that Shego could've been there to share it with her. Queens of the

world, they would've been. But Shego had chosen to betray her.

Which needed to be dealt with. Kim sighed. She didn't *want* to deal with Shego. She wanted to give Shego her time, to let her come to her senses and see what was best for everybody. Unfortunately she didn't have the luxury of letting it happen that way. Shego was one of the very few people in the world who presented a credible threat to her. Which both made her so desirable and made it necessary to deal with her harshly.

And she couldn't even allow herself the luxury of defeating Shego herself. She'd have to use a subordinate.

"Monkey Fist," she said into her wrist communicator.

The answer came within a couple of seconds.

"Yes, mistress?"

"Some time between now and zero hour Shego will try to infiltrate the airship and take me out," Kim said. "You and your monkey ninjas will make sure she doesn't succeed."

"Absolutely, mistress," he said. "Anything else?"

"Not really," she said. "The top priority is to stop her. If the most expedient way to do that is to kill her, then she dies. The same goes for anyone with her."

"We will not disappoint you, mistress."

There was a nearly inaudible crackle as the connection broke.

She looked up at the airship. It was beautiful, in its way. And it was just about ready to lift off.

Kim turned her jetpack on and headed for the airship's bridge.

The moon shone full, turning the world above the clouds into a monochromatic other-world. There was nothing but the cold silver moon and pinprick stars above them, the soft-looking cloud cover below them and at the horizon the huge silhouette of Kim's airship fortress.

The headphones in Ron's helmet hissed.

"We're in range," Shego's voice said. "Time to drop auxiliary fuel tanks. And if you disobeyed my instructions and brought something metal along, drop that too. I don't want that thing to catch us on radar."

Ron, Wade and Shego were hanging under the wings of three ultralight airplanes. Or, at least, not too remote cousins of them. Shego had called them airborne infiltration units, and while they looked exactly like the ultralights Ron had seen on TV, these apparently differed greatly in materials, speed and fuel capacity. He had noticed that the frame seemed to be made out of carbon composite rather than metal, so he supposed Shego was right.

She usually was.

Wade had convinced Global Justice to give them equipment and a ride, and they'd been dropped out of an airplane at an altitude far, far higher than Ron wanted to think about. The solid cloud cover was a long way under them, and he supposed the actual ground was another long way below that. In spite of knowing nothing about ultralight flying, he felt sure that they weren't supposed to go this high.

Or this fast.

"Fifteen seconds to impact," Shego said over the helmet communicator. "Too late now to check your crash webbing if you haven't already."

Ron had. Oh, how he had. The crash webbing was, as the name hinted, a web of lines that was supposed to absorb the forces of a crash enough that the person in the

webbing would get severe bruises rather than broken bones. Provided that the crash happened pretty much frontally, so that most of the impact forces would go into the aircraft frame and give the webbing room to work.

"Ten seconds."

He saw Shego's ultralight light up green as she turned her hands on fire. She was flying in front, with Ron and Wade flying behind and to each side of her. In front of them, the airship now looked more like a wall than a vehicle. That thing was *enormous!*

"Five seconds."

Bolt after bolt of green fire lanced out from Shego's ultralight into the side of the airship. They exploded when they hit the airship wall, leaving lit-up openings behind when they faded.

"Aim for a hole each, boys," Shego said. "And don't expect to hear that from me again *ever.*"

Ron frowned. He had just enough time to get a feeling that something had gone over his head before his ultralight smashed into the airship.

She'd tried to make the openings for Ron and Wade small enough that the frames of their ultralights would catch in them, expending energy in tearing free and into the airship. Even with that, they'd probably be knocked out for a couple of minutes after impact.

For herself, she made a hole large enough for her ultralight to pass through it while only ripping the wings off. It'd get her much farther into whatever room was behind the wall, and make for a much rougher impact. She, however, could take it.

The aircraft slammed into the airship wall. Even as she was passing through, she started firing plasma bolts straight out to the sides. If anything was in the way of the boys' entrances, she could at least help a little in removing it. Also, the extra explosions would add to the general chaos, giving them a few seconds more to recuperate from the crashes.

The wingless aircraft frame slid across the floor, caught on something, tumbled, tore apart and finally came to a stop. Shego was thrown to and fro, but the impact webbing ate the forces better than she expected, so that when she came to a stop she just hit the quick release and dropped to the floor.

They'd landed in a hydroponic garden. Line after line of tables full of trays with plants in nutrient solution. Flimsy tables, excellent for deforming under impact. No wonder she'd come through in such good shape. Even better, the room seemed to be empty of people. That wouldn't last long, but it was nice not to have to start out fighting for her life. She unstrapped the Attitudinator from her back and tore the impact foam from around it. Better have that ready to use. They might get lucky and Kim herself would come checking what was going on. She had a feeling that they'd used up pretty much all their luck in their entrance, though.

A groan came from the ultralight wreck closest to her. She reached into it, hit the crash webbing's quick release and let Ron drop to the floor.

"Ow!" he said, so he was clearly alive and functioning relatively normally.

"Get up," she said. "People will be here any second now."

She did the same to Wade, who reacted much the same. The two boys were soon on their feet.

"Let's go," Shego said. "We've been lucky so far. It won't last forever."

"Wait," Wade said. "Let me see if I can connect to the on-board computer system."

If our luck holds a little longer, maybe we can find out exactly where Kim is."

"She's a long way from here," a male voice said. It was accompanied by the chittering of monkeys. Monkey Fist. Of course. Shego *had* wondered what Kim wanted him for among all the scientific geniuses. A small army of monkey ninjas for internal security made a lot of sense that way.

Next to her, Ron assumed a very strange fighting pose.

"Laugh while you can, monkey boy!" he said.

"Mistress Possible?"

Kim sat in her command chair on the bridge of the *Club Banana*. Several computer monitors hung on extensible arms in front of her, and two keyboards swiveled in front of her when she sat down. Beyond and below the command chair were five similar workstations for her staff, and beyond them was the airship's enormous wind-shield.

"Yes?" she said to the staff woman who had spoken. One of Dementor's henchpeople, since they had proven to be by far the most reliable.

"There's been multiple impacts and hull breaches in the starboard side hydroponics labs," the henchwoman said. "Monkey Fist is on his way there."

"Any information on the impacts?"

It had to be Shego.

"Almost nothing, mistress. The security camera saw a flash of green light before it was destroyed."

A wave of pleasure went through Kim. *Shego*.

She really should let Monkey Fist handle it. Shego had come here to stop Kim, that much was certain. By going there and fighting her, Kim would only improve her chances of succeeding. Tactically speaking, the best move Kim could make would be to simply leave for the auxiliary satellite control center at Kilimanjaro. Shego might be able to disable or destroy the *Club Banana*, but another one could be built. It'd be a minor setback at worst.

But if she left she wouldn't get to see Shego again. Wouldn't get to dance with her one more time.

Kim shook her head. *Fight* with her. She and Shego *fought*. Why had she thought of it as a dance?

Because that's what it's always been, hasn't it? her annoyingly truthful self said. The two of you never really tried to hurt each other. You always used attacks that you were sure the other one could take. The few times accidents have happened and one of you have actually been in danger, the other one has usually *helped*. A true enemy would never do that.

If she tried one more time maybe she could get Shego to join her. She unbuckled from the command seat.

"I'm heading down to the hydroponics lab," she said to the henchwoman. "Let Monkey Fist know I'm on my way."

"Yes, mistress," the henchwoman said.

Almost a dozen monkey ninjas lay spread over the room, knocked out or killed by Shego's comet bolts, but every time one went down another one took its place. She kept shooting them. Sooner or later, they'd run out. Over on the other side of the room, a weirdly slapstick-like fight was going on between Ron and Monkey Fist. Shego had expected Kim's old sidekick to be brushed aside like so much wet paper,

but somehow he always managed to avoid Fist's attacks by pure blind luck. Not only that, but he often got Fist to be hurt in random but amusing ways. Overall, it worked out to a strangely even battle.

Behind her, Wade had connected his portable computer to a socket in the wall and was typing furiously. Shego hoped he was doing something useful, because she was shooting monkeys in order to let him keep at it. Well, and because exploding monkeys were kind of neat.

"Lord Monkey Fist?" a female voice said over the PA system.

"Busy!" Monkey Fist yelled.

"Mistress Possible wishes to inform you that she is on her way to assist you, sir," the voice said. "That is all."

Suddenly all the fighting stopped. Wild elation rose in Shego. Kim was on her way! Even if they didn't win, at least she'd get to see her one last time. And, well, their chances of winning just went up by a lot.

"Kim is coming?" Ron said. He looked somewhere between uncomfortable and scared.

"Why is she *telling* you she's coming?" Monkey Fist screamed. "She could have struck by surprise!"

The monkey man had a point.

"Wade?" Shego said. "How's it coming?"

"I've got read access," he said, sounding distracted. "Kim's coming here for sure. Or at least her battlesuit is."

The battlesuit. Swell. Shego frowned.

"Can you disable the suit?"

"Not remotely. That'd be too much of a security problem."

Shego sighed. Of course it would. But if someone like Drakken or Dementor had built it, it would've had a remote cutoff anyway. Plus a self-destruct button. Probably in the middle of the chest.

"Does it have a self-destruct button?" she asked.

Wade looked up at her.

"Who'd be insane enough to put a self-destruct in a battlesuit?" he said.

Shego didn't bother to tell him.

"Anything else?" she said.

"The final satellite launched five minutes ago," Wade said. "They plan to bring the system online in an hour."

"Well," Shego said, "if we haven't succeeded by then we never will anyway."

As if on cue, the fighting resumed.

Kim took a split second after she entered the room to assess the situation. Over there, a Mystical Monkey Power duel between Monkey Fist and Ron. Over there, Shego shooting monkey ninjas to protect Wade, who was working on his computer. Next to her, monkey ninjas waiting to replace those shot by Shego.

She groaned inwardly. Supervillains!

She stepped into the room. "Shego," she said.

"Kimmie," Shego said, not looking away from the monkey ninjas. "Glad you could make it."

"You should've let me know you were dropping in," Kim said. "I could've arranged a better reception party."

"Sorry to disappoint, Princess," Shego said.

"Wade," she whispered out of the corner of her mouth. "How can I disable the suit non-remotely?"

"Just unzip it," Wade said, also in a hushed voice. "It'd be dangerous for the wearer to use it when it's not done up properly, so that makes it shut down."

Oh, *perfect*. The way to take down her way too attractive enemy was to try and get her clothes off. If she ever met the being responsible for irony, she'd kick its ass.

"Got it!" Wade said behind her. Security lasers ejected from lots of panels in the walls and ceiling, and started picking off ninja monkeys.

"Go for Kim, Shego," Wade said. "I'll handle the monkeys."

Shego unslung the Attitudinator and went for Kim.

When she saw Shego come charging at her, Kim was filled with a strong sense of rightness. This was how it should be. Or, well, one of the ways it should be. It would be nicer if Shego came charging to plant a kiss on Kim's lips instead of a foot in her face, but you couldn't have everything.

She dodged a plasma blast, bounced off the ceiling and tried to land a kick of her own. Shego somersaulted over her, and at the apex of her arc fired her weapon straight down at Kim. Their eyes met through the transparent glow of the oncoming bolt. There was, Kim thought, a hint of loss and remorse in Shego's eyes.

Then the bolt hit the Attitudinator shield she'd added to the suit, harmlessly split into several and dissipated.

Shego landed on her feet. They looked at each other again.

"Did you really think it would be that easy?" Kim said. "That I wouldn't have figured out what happened to me? The Attitudinator leaves neural traces, you know."

"No," Shego said. "I didn't really. But I had to check."

Of course she had to. Making sure. Getting it *right*. Shego'd do that.

"You can still join me, you know," Kim said. "What do you want if not the Bahamas? France? China? You can have it."

She could see Shego hesitate before she answered.

"Sorry, Kimmie," she said. "But what you're doing is just wrong."

"Oh really," Kim said. "But it wasn't when you helped Drakken try it over and over again?"

"No," Shego said, and Kim thought she could hear sadness in her voice. "Because he was too incompetent to ever actually *do* it. You, I'm afraid, aren't."

Kim smiled at her.

"That's the strangest compliment I've ever had, Shego," she said. "So if I didn't take over the world, you'd join me?"

"You'd do that?" Shego said. She lowered her guard fractionally in surprise.

"No," Kim said and attacked.

It quickly became obvious to Shego that turning evil hadn't just vastly increased Kim's capacity for mischief, but also raised her hand-to-hand combat skills considerably. She had to spend a lot more effort than usual just to not get hit. Kim must have let her get that first clear shot in, just to show Shego that her main weapon was ineffective. That her plan was doomed to fail.

Shego was actually starting to worry that she was right. Sure, she could get another shot in if she could disable Kim's suit -- but as long as Kim was wearing the suit Shego didn't have a chance to get close enough to disable it. She looked around the room for something that might help.

Wade was still shooting monkeys, aiming the lasers with mouse and keyboard. They monkeys were getting better at dodging, though, and he wouldn't be able to keep it up for very much longer. Ron was still engaged in his weird duel with Monkey Fist, stumbling under punches and accidentally kicking knees. There was no help to get from that corner.

She did a double take.

Yes there was.

Gradually, she brought her own dodging and weaving close to the two Monkey-fu masters. She did her damndest to make it look accidental. If Kim saw where she was going she'd figure out what Shego was after in a heartbeat.

A kick that near caved in her ribcage gave her an opportunity to land within arm's reach of Ron's pant leg. She aimed a quick series of plasma bolts straight at Kim's face, to obscure her vision. With her other hand, she ripped open Ron's leg pocket and grabbed Rufus.

"Undo her suit zipper!" she hissed at the little rodent.

"Huh?" he said.

"Just do it!" she hissed.

She jumped, ran, somersaulted, did cartwheels and just about everything else acrobatic she could think of, shooting wildly all the time.

Kim followed suit.

"Ready to give up, Shego?" she said. "This way you'll just delay the inevitable, not defeat me."

Shego kept dodging. She couldn't give Kim time to see what she was holding in her hand. Not until...

...she came close enough to drop him on Kim's head.

Kim stopped.

"Rufus?" she said, clearly confused.

Shego stopped and aimed the Attitudinator.

"Mroo-yah!" Rufus said. Then he scampered down Kim's face with a rodent's deceptive speed, grabbed the handle on her suit zipper and jumped.

The zipper opened, pulled down by the weight of the naked mole rat.

Shego fired.

Aftermath

For the two-hundredth time that day, Shego picked up the phone.

For the two-hundredth time, she dialed all the digits but the last one, then put the phone back down again.

She threw herself on the hotel bed, covered her face with the thick, luxurious pillow and screamed.

Why did it have to be so hard?

She threw the pillow as hard as she could across the room. Before it hit the far wall, she blasted it into a cloud of feathers with a plasma bolt. It made her feel a little bit better.

She picked up the phone for the two-hundred and first time.

"I don't know, Wade," Ron said to the computer screen. "I mean, what would I *say*? Hey, KP, sorry you were turned into an evil mastermind who nearly lobotomized the entire world and got five billion people killed?"

On the screen, Wade gestured at him.

"Say *something*! She's been locked in her room for ten days now. We need to do something to get her talking to people again. Ask her for help with your homework. Invite her along to Bueno Nacho. Do something!"

Ron crossed his arms over his chest.

"Why should I be the one doing it?" he said. "Why don't you talk to her?"

"Because you're the one who's known her since pre-K," Wade said. "And she refuses to talk to me. I even faked caller id once, and she just hung up."

"I'm the one she *dumped*," Ron said.

"Woooooe," Rufus said and sadly shook his head.

Wade sighed.

"Yes, Ron, I know," he said. "And maybe she's changed her mind about that now that she's not evil any more."

Ron shook his head.

"No go, Wade," he said. "She said that she and Monitors has had some kind of thing going for over a year. Way longer than Kim was evil."

"So you're just going to let her sit there? To give up on Team Possible?"

Ron put on his resolute face.

"Yes, Wade," he said. "I think I am."

He reached out and turned the computer off. Once it had died down, he let himself fall forward. For a while he just sat there, face resting on the keyboard.

"Rufus," he finally said. "Let's go drown our sorrow in Nacos."

"Woe," Rufus agreed.

At the two hundred and sixty-fourth attempt Shego managed not only to dial all the numbers, but also keep the phone to her ear until someone answered.

"Yeahhello," a perky male voice said.

"Doctor Possible?" she asked. It would be just too silly if she'd spent all this time almost dialling the wrong number.

"Speaking!" the voice said. "What can I do for you? Rocket science a specialty, but everything's possible for a Possible!"

Shego took the phone from her ear and stared at it for a moment. Was this guy for real?

"Er," she said into the phone. "Can I talk to Kim, please?"

"Ah," Dr Possible said. "Weeeeell... Do you want her to talk back?"

"Yes," Shego said. "I was hoping to..."

Her voice failed her for a moment.

"...have a conversation," she said instead of the word she found she couldn't say.

"Okay, see that may be a problem," Dr Possible said. "Because Kim's refusing to speak with anybody. Even her mother! But if you just wanted to talk *to* her, we could rig the phone to an amplifier, put a loudspeaker outside the door to her room and she could hear what you said that way."

It made a twisted kind of sense. Shego was beginning to see where Kim got her can-do attitude from.

"Yeah, well," she said, "I was also hoping for the conversation to be private."

"I can ask Jim and Tim to stop tapping the phone line," Dr Possible said.

Again, Shego was briefly speechless.

"Your kids are snooping on your phone?" she asked.

"Well, they like playing around with technology and someone told them about the Echelon project," he said. "They wanted their own."

"Er, I think I'll talk to Kim later," Shego said. "And not over the phone."

"Okey-dokey!" Dr Possible said. "Nice talking to you!"

Shego stared at the phone after she hung up. What kind of madhouse had Kim grown up in? She'd known that both Kim's parents were near-geniuses in their respective fields, which she guessed came with a certain amount of eccentricity, but still...

She put the phone down and got up from the bed. Having finally managed to call, she just felt frustrated not to have reached Kim herself.

She knew where Kim was. If she snuck in her window, Kim couldn't really avoid talking to her. Well, communicating with her. If you included punching and kicking as forms of communication.

Shego sighed. Well, if Kim wanted to punch and kick her, Shego couldn't really blame her. So, okay, a visit it was. She looked out at the setting sun. A late-night visit, it looked like, but if she didn't go right now she might never work up the courage again.

She walked out on the balcony and looked down. She was only sixteen stories up, but on the other hand the pool was smaller here. She felt how the wind interacted with the hotel's facade, estimated the thermals from the kitchen air vents and decided exactly how hard she'd have to kick off from the railing in order to land in the middle of the pool.

Then she went and took the elevator like a normal person.

"Um, Ron?"

Ron looked up from his Grande Size chimmerito with extra cheese. Extra, cold, congealing cheese. He blinked. How long had he been sitting here? It had to be quite a while, if the cheese had had time to get into *that* state.

"RON!"

He looked even further up. Monique was standing there, arms across her chest and evil glare aimed in his direction.

"Have you lost your mind, boy?" she said.

"What?" he cleverly retorted.

"Do you know what time it is?"

She did not look happy. Ron looked out the window. It was dark. Really dark.

"Er, no?"

"It is two thirty A M," Monique said, really stressing the letters. "Do you know when Bueno Nacho closes?"

"One in the morning on weekdays, two on Saturday and Sundays," he said.

"Oh," he added when he finally saw where this was heading.

Monique sat down.

"Ned tried telling you to leave an hour and a half ago, Ron," she said. "He says you were just sitting here like a zombie not reacting to anything. Finally he called for help."

"Why you?" Ron asked.

Monique sighed.

"Because Kim ain't answering her damn phone, that's why," she said. "Come on, let's leave."

She got up from the seat again, picked up the soundly sleeping Rufus and put him in her purse. Ron got up too. That chimmerito wasn't edible any longer anyway. They walked out of the building, and Ned locked the doors behind them the moment it was physically possible.

"Kim wouldn't have come anyway," Ron said. He kicked at a pebble and missed.

"Sure she would," Monique said. "If she hadn't gone all hermit on us."

"She dumped me," he said. "She cheated on me and lied to me."

"She cheated on you?" Monique said. "Woah! Who with?"

"Er, *you*?" Ron said.

"What?" Monique laughed. "That was just a girly friend thing, boy. That don't count as cheating. Everyone does that."

They were heading nowhere in particular.

"I'm pretty sure everyone doesn't," Ron said. "And she still lied to me!"

"What about?"

"You know, only the whole being gay thing."

"High School is a harsh place, Ron," Monique said. "You can't blame a girl for not having the guts to throw herself to the wolves dressed in bacon. Hell, do you even know if she's sure about herself? She's only eighteen! When did you guys talk about this anyway?"

Ron stuck his hands deep in his pockets and glared at the ground.

"While she was evil," he mumbled.

Monique hit him over the head with her purse, causing a scared yelp from Rufus.

"Ow!" Ron said. "What was that for?"

"Your girlfriend, who you've known for Hell knows how many years, says some stupid things while her brains are fried by some weirdo ray thing, and you just give up on her ass? Damn, boy, that girl is way too good for you. You don't deserve her at all!"

He raised his finger and pointed in her general direction.

"But,..." he said.

She glared at him.

He lowered the finger.

"Never mind," he said. "I'll try to talk to her tomorrow."

He started walking again, this time in the direction of their homes.

"If she's talking to anybody at all," he added.

In spite of the late hour, there was a light on in Kim's room.

Shego, standing on the driveway below the window, swallowed. One less excuse not to do this. She jumped, grabbed hold of the edge of the roof and vaulted up on it. The windows to Kim's room were large, and set a bit in from the edge of the garages under them, so there was a decent-sized ledge for Shego to land on. She knelt there, looking in.

Kim was sitting at her computer. Playing Tetris. The pieces were falling at an astonishingly fast pace. Her fingers were a blur on the keys, keeping up with the game. Shego tried to see what the score was, but couldn't tell more than that it was a longer number than any she'd ever managed.

She waited until Kim had finished her game, then she knocked on the window.

Kim turned and looked at Shego.

Then she turned back to the game.

Shego knocked again.

And again.

Eventually, Kim paused the game, came over and opened the window.

"Yes?" she said.

She didn't even sound angry.

"We need to talk," Shego said.

Kim started to shut the window again, but Shego grabbed hold of it.

"Please, Kim?" she said.

After a brief hesitation, Kim let go of the window and stepped aside. Shego climbed in and closed the window behind her.

"I didn't think you knew that word," Kim said.

"I've heard it often enough," Shego said.

Kim had backed up and stood leaning against her desk, as far away from Shego as the room allowed and not looking at her.

Shego's heart sank. She hadn't really expected this to go well, but it still hurt.

"I'm listening," Kim said. "Say what you want to say and leave."

Shego gathered the few shreds of courage she had left. Maybe later she'd go do something easy to get her confidence up again. Like break into Fort Knox using only a pair of chopsticks.

"I'm sorry," she said.

Kim looked up.

"What?" she said.

"I'm sorry," Shego repeated. "I'm sorry for what I put you through."

Suddenly there was fire in Kim's eyes. A distinct improvement over the dead-looking sadness of a few moments ago, but it didn't really make Shego any less nervous.

"You're *sorry*?" Kim said.

Shego nodded.

Kim came closer to her.

"Is that why you came here? To *apologise*?"

"Yes," Shego said.

Kim punched her in the face. It came like a total surprise to Shego. Usually, there were tiny muscle movements a split second before a punch that helped her dodge them, but not this time. The urge to hit back, to defend herself, exploded within her.

She pushed it back down.

"You turned me evil!" Kim hissed. "I was about to have *six billion people* killed!"

Six? So they'd underestimated the number...

Kim hit Shego again. There were tears in her eyes, if from anger or hurt Shego couldn't tell.

"I did *horrible* things to my enemies! You saw what I did to poor Drakken, and as for Amy..."

Kim shuddered.

"I blackmailed Mr Barkin," she went on. "I mind-controlled the governments of every country on the planet. I broke up with my boyfriend. I..."

Words apparently failed her. She was crying openly now, and it was pretty obvious that it was mostly from anger. She was not only punching at Shego. She kicked at her, threw her at the walls, slammed her to the floor.

Shego let her.

"Fight *back*, damn you!" Kim screamed.

Shego had just hit the floor a bit extra hard and her vision was a little blurry. Kim was standing over her, holding on to the front of her suit with both fists.

"Why?" she said. "I deserve it, don't I?"

Kim let go of Shego and dropped like a sack of flour to a sitting position on the floor. Her entire body shook with sobs of helpless fury.

Shego got up from the floor. Slowly, and with several winces. Damn, but that girl could hit hard. She knelt down next to Kim and stroked her hair.

"Look, princess," she said. "All those things are *my* fault, okay? *I* hit you with the Attitudinator. If not for that, you'd never in a million years have done any of it."

Shego fully expected to be punched again. Instead, Kim threw her arms around her and pulled her into a bone-cracking hug. She pressed her face to Shego's chest and cried even harder. Or possibly screamed in anger. It was getting hard to tell. Shego just stayed put, unsure what was going on. She tried gently putting her arms around the young woman. She wasn't rebuffed, so she escalated to slowly stroking her back.

They sat like that for a long while. Shego had no idea how long, nor did she care. Holding Kim and, apparently, being a comfort to her was something that she was willing to keep up for however long it took.

Eventually, the sobs subsided. Kim relaxed her death-grip around Shego and lifted her head from her chest.

"I got your suit wet," she said, running a finger along the large tear-stain on Shego's chest.

"So not a problem," Shego whispered.

Kim looked up at her. She frowned.

"You're going to have a black eye," she said.

Shego shrugged.

"I heal fast," she said. "Go ahead and punch more, if it'll help."

Kim made a sound that might in a few hundred thousand years evolve into a laugh.

"No, thanks," she said. "I think I'm done with that bit."

They both awkwardly made their way to their feet.

"Did you really come here to apologise?" Kim said.

"Yes, Kimmie," Shego said. "I really did."

Kim sat down on her bed. Shego remained standing.

"When was the last time before this you apologised for something you'd done?" Kim asked. "I mean, truly apologised because you regretted what you'd done, not just

said it sort of ironically."

Shego blinked. That was not a question she'd been expecting.

"Er," she said. When was it? A long time ago, that was for sure. Maybe when... No, not then... Not that time either. Nor that one. Or that one.

"I don't think I ever did before," she finally said.

Kim looked at her with something Shego couldn't identify in her eyes.

"So why me?" she said. "Why now?"

"Nobody was ever about to destroy the world because of me before," Shego tried.

Kim looked doubtfully at her.

"Because I was afraid I might lose you," Shego mumbled.

"Lose me how?" Kim said.

Now it was Shego's turn not to look at Kim.

"Look," she said. "I know it sounds strange, but we do have some kind of relationship. A weird one where we mostly just meet to fight one another, but I'd miss it."

"Is that all you want?" Kim said. "To go on like we have for the past few years?"

"Of course it's not all I want," Shego said. "But it's what I have, and what I don't want to lose."

Kim got up from the bed and went to stand right in front of Shego.

"Much of what I did while I was evil is kind of hard to remember," she said. "But I distinctly remember coming on to you pretty hard, and you running away. Diving off a twenty-eighth story balcony, if I remember correctly."

Shego looked away.

"That wasn't you," she said. "That was the evil talking."

"Oh no," Kim said. "That *was* me. A lot more... *active* about it than I've ever been before, but still my desires."

Shego swallowed, her mouth having gone all dry.

"Did you really dump the buffoon?" she said. "That wasn't just the evil talking?"

"His name is Ron," Kim said. "You know that. And yes, I really did. Partly it was the evil talking, but it's going to stay that way. There's nothing quite like having all your inhibitions removed to make you understand what you truly want."

"So what is it you want, Kim Possible?" Shego whispered.

Kim tilted her head up and kissed her. Unlike their first kiss in the hotel, this one was hesitant and overly gentle, as if they were both afraid that even the slightest force might break things. Even so, it made Shego tingle all over and her head swim.

"That," Kim said after they broke apart. "Lots more like that."

"I think that can be arranged," Shego said dreamily, her arms still around Kim and Kim's around her. "A lot."

Kim smiled.

"Goo-," she said, and was interrupted by a huge yawn.

Shego arched an eyebrow.

"When did you last sleep, Princess?" she said.

"Um," Kim said. "Couple of days ago?"

"Been too tense to fall sleep? Nightmares?"

Kim nodded.

Shego stroked her hair.

"Less tense now?" she asked.

Kim nodded again, smiling beatifically.

"Let's lie down," Shego said. "You sleep, and I keep watch for nightmares. If they show up, I'll give them a plasma blast right in the fangs."

Kim laughed.

"I'm not twelve," she said.

Shego let her hands drift down Kim's back until they were resting on her firm behind.

"Oh, I *know*," she said. "But for a little while, relax as if you were?"

"Okay," Kim said.

Shego picked her up and carried her the few steps to the bed. She put her down, and laid down herself maybe an inch away. Kim scooted closer and put her arm around Shego, so they lay touching front to front.

"You'll be here when I wake up?" Kim said.

"Yes," Shego said. "I promise."

"Good," Kim said. It wasn't many seconds before her breath became soft and slow.

Shego lay there, looking at her from too close to see anything. Pretty soon, her arm would go numb. By morning, her neck would be stiff as a board and her back aching like nobody's business.

She couldn't remember ever being happier.

Ron rang the Possibles' doorbell with greater trepidation than ever before. When he heard footsteps approaching from inside, he almost turned and ran.

"Oh, hi Ronald," Dr Possible said when she saw who it was. "How are you this morning?"

"Been better," Ron said. "As a piece of advice, don't spend most of the night at Bueno Nacho and the rest of it walking around. Makes you tired."

"I'll keep that in mind," Dr Possible said. "Do you want to come in?"

"Yeah," Ron said. "I was kind of hoping to get to talk to Kim. I know she's locked herself in her room and isn't coming out, but..."

"Oh, no," Dr Possible said. "She came down and got lots of breakfast food this morning."

Ron blinked.

"She did?" he said.

Dr Possible nodded enthusiastically.

"She took it all up to her room, but it's nice to see that she's eating again. She looked really happy, too."

That was good. Weird, but good.

"Um, can I go up and see her?" he said.

"Sure!" Dr Possible said. "Just make sure you knock before you enter, in case she isn't dressed yet."

Right. Just what he needed. A reminder of possibly naked Kim. Which he hadn't seen since a long time before the concept became interesting, but could vividly imagine.

He resolutely walked up the stairs. He'd promised Monique he'd talk to Kim, and if he couldn't do much else right he could at least keep his promises. He was just about to knock on Kim's door when he heard giggling from inside.

Two giggling voices. Both female. What the...?

He knocked.

There was a sudden silence from inside, followed by the rustling of cloth.

"Come in," Kim's voice said after a few seconds.

Ron gingerly opened the door. As it swung open, he looked inside. The first thing he saw was Kim's top and bra, thrown at the floor. Then her pants, and a scrap of

cloth that probably was her panties. After that, also tossed on the floor, a black and green catsuit.

For a few moments, his brain refused to process the information. Then he abruptly forced the door open the rest of the way.

Kim was sitting in her bed, wearing a dressing gown. A tray loaded with breakfast food sat on her bedside table. And in the bed, with a blanket pulled up to just above her breasts, sat Shego. Kim was holding a piece of buttered toast, and from their positions and giggly demeanor he got the impression that she'd been in the process of feeding it to Shego when he knocked. And that the rustling he'd heard had been Shego pulling the blanket up to cover herself.

"Hi there," Shego said, breaking the tableau.

"Hi, Ron," Kim said.

"Kim?" Ron said. "*Shego?*"

Rufus stuck his head out of Ron's leg pocket.

"Mroo-hoo!" he said.

Kim giggled a little. She put the toast down on the tray.

"Ron," she said. "May I introduce my girlfriend Shego?"

"Girlfriend?" Ron said.

"Is he always this eloquent?" Shego asked.

"Only when he's stunned," Kim said.

"I talked to Monique," he managed to get out. "So, uh, friends?"

Kim smiled.

"Of course," she said. "Ron, if you wait in the living room we'll get dressed and join you there. So you can think a little better, and we'll sort everything out."

"Uh-hu," he said. Then he closed the door and headed downstairs.

Through the door, he heard severe giggling break out.

Epilogue

The wind and rain whipped the helicopter landing pad. The powerful lights around it made the raindrops glitter like mad, which really didn't help visibility much. In addition, the roar from the Global Justice helicopter made talking pretty much impossible.

Except for someone with a sufficiently powerful voice who screamed at the top of his lungs while he was being handcuffed and dragged into the helicopter.

"You two think you're all that!" Dr Drakken screamed. "But you're not!"

"So he figured out the bomb wasn't actually there?" Shego said after they'd gone inside again. The corridors in the museum's storage wing were bare concrete and fluorescent lights, but it was at least dry and silent.

"Yes," Kim said. "A simple X-ray would reveal the ruse."

She and Shego were walking really close, almost touching. Ron kept a few steps behind them.

"That reminds me," Shego said. "If you don't mind talking about it, what *did* you do to DNamy while you were evil?"

Kim shuddered.

"Every time she didn't obey, or failed me, I sold one of her cuddlebuddies on Ebay," she said.

Shego waited for the rest, but nothing came.

"That's *it*?" she said. "You sold her dolls on Ebay?! *That's* worse than making someone think he has a bomb in his head or infecting someone with mutant Ebola?"

"They're not just dolls," Kim said. "Particularly to someone like Amy. Some of the ones she had were unique. Her collection was the best in the world, the envy of all other cuddlebuddy collectors. The ones I sold went to other collectors, so for every one her collection got a little less and someone else's grew. With most of her self-worth tied up in that collection, well..."

She paused for a while.

"It's probably a collector thing," she added.

"Uh-hu," Shego said. Or just a madwoman thing, she didn't say, since she'd seen Kim's own small collection of cuddlebuddies.

"So," Ron interrupted, "anyone for Bueno Nacho?"

"Sure," Kim said, "Why not?"

"Aaaaand you girls can use the ladies' room for over an hour like you did yesterday," Ron added.

Kim blushed. Shego just smirked.

"Well, it's a taco place," Shego said.

Kim blushed even harder. Before she could say anything, there was a bi-bi-de-beep sound.

Three hands reached into three different pockets and brought out three communicators.

"Wade, what's the sitch?" the three human members of Team Possible said in unison.

"Booo-yah!" the naked mole-rat member added.