

1 INT. THE PRELIMINARIES- NOON

Zaire and Jerzel are in the hallway of the stadium being held for The Preliminaries. There's a huge screen in the middle roof showing a looping video of The Cosmic Spark explaining the rules.

THE COSMIC SPARK (LOOPING VIDEO)

The Preliminaries is built like a tournament bracket. The rules are simple. Land a solid hit on your opponent and win. It can't be a double trade and if it's blocked, it doesn't count. Exactly 128 people have joined the fray, making an even tournament grid. Good luck... You're gonna need it.

Cheyne is absent. Zaire and Jerzel walk into the stadium bleachers and take a seat. The area is loud and booming. They are each holding a booklet containing bracket information. There are 4 brackets, with 16 contestants per bracket.

ZAIRE

From the drift I'm catchin', it seems like there are only 4 people joining the program in the end?

Jerzel is silent. She smiles mischievously with her arms crossed.

ZAIRE

(In thoughts, rolls his eyes) Cheyne must be extremely lucky. He doesn't get to show up until tomorrow!

ZAIRE

By the way, Jay, what's **your** deal? I'd expect you to be among the ones screaming of excitement.

She smiles even more. Zaire looks at Jerzel, extremely surprised and concerned. He gets up and gives Jay some space for herself. He leaves his spot and starts walking to the refreshments center.

ZAIRE

This must be a whole **thing** to her. Anyway, there's gotta **some** good grub in this place.

While Zaire walks to the food court, he sees a popular looking kid surrounded in light walking to the hallway. The kid has a train of girls cheering him on. On another side, he sees a young boxer and a wrestler sparring with each other.

(*The boxer has green shorts, black hair and bright green gloves. The wrestler has a bulky build with a red and black fur coat and a fire pattern on his shorts.*)

He looks closely and notices a slim girl with green skin, long ears and blonde hair in a black mysterious looking suit. She has a weird triangle pattern on her forehead. She looks back condescendingly. Zaire's facial expression quickly changes to suspicious. He keeps on walking.

2 EXT. OUTSIDE THE BUILDING- NOON

Cheyne is walking around the outside of the building, headed to a merch stand. He looks around and sees Timestopper shirts and Cosmic Spark shirts (with bold letters printed on "The World Needs More Heroes".., along with mugs, candies and pins, phone cases and books. Below those things are candy boxes and chips bags.

As soon as he's about to grab the last Timestopper shirt, a figure zooms by, jumping over and taking it. The figure runs and turns a street corner.

MERCHANT

Securi-

CHEYNE

I got it. Watch...

Cheyne puts on the pair of goggles he brought with him, zips up his hoodie and puts on the hood.

CHEYNE

...and learn!

He chases the figure for a bit and loses it before coming up with a plan.

CHEYNE

(in thoughts) If I predict where this guy is going to be and intercept them, I can stop them right in their tracks.

He turns a fast corner and catches the figure, who nearly runs into him. The figure is actually a costumed thief, but something about them seems familiar. The green hair. A crowd of surrounding people stop their daily activities and stare at the scene. Cheyne secretly takes a picture of her face in order to turn into the police.

CHEYNE

You! Y-you're that girl from the orientation!

CHEYNE

You apply to this program and then get caught red handed in a theft, huh? Well, this is a development!

He takes out his phone and shows her the picture.

CHEYNE

I'll see you in juvi!

AMANDA

Wait, you don't understand!

She takes off the mask.

AMANDA

It's a social experiment! It's a social experiment, alright? The Cosmic Spark sent me on a test in order to see who would react during a petty theft, and you, my friend, have passed!

Amanda laughs nervously. The surrounding people make a sound of realization. However, Cheyne is visibly not impressed. He takes the shirt back and walks away to the stand. Amanda catches up and walks beside him.

CHEYNE

You're a pretty good liar, I'll give you that.

AMANDA

Look. Around these parts, a girl's gotta do anything to survive.

Cheyne stops walking for a second.

CHEYNE

Food or money, I would understand, but taking a shirt doesn't exactly translate to "survival". There are people out there just like you, and there ar-

He has a moment of realization.

CHEYNE

Wait a **minute**. What exactly do you mean by "survive"?

AMANDA

Well, I mean...

He looks up at her and turns around.

AMANDA

It's complicated. I've just been taking resources from anywhere I can just to live in these parts. The truth is, I'm a freak. A "monster of nature", they say.

She turns her head the other way.

AMANDA

I'm an outcast. Homeless. Now, if you don't mind I'll be looking somewhere else. Please don't try and stop me.

She drops the mask and walks away.

Cheyne is internally thinking. He holds up the shirt and looks at it. The camera focuses on the quote: "The World Needs More Heroes".

"The World Needs More Heroes"...

"The World Needs More Heroes"...

CHEYNE

(in thoughts) I think Jay was right about my conscience after all.

CHEYNE

Holup!

He runs in front of Amanda.

CHEYNE

I got a few bucks on me. I just might... buy you the shirt.

3 EXT. OUTSIDE THE BUILDING (MERCH STAND)- AFTERNOON

Cheyne and Amanda are at the merch stand, buying the once stolen shirt.

Cheyne gives in a 10. He gets the shirt and his receipt.

CHEYNE

Sorry for any inconveniences. Have a good day!

MERCHANT

Thanks for your time, come again!

Amanda walks contently with her new shirt.

AMANDA

You didn't have to do that, and yet you did!

Unlike everyone else, you weren't some kind of bystander. You took action.

...why?

Cheyne

A friend of mine always tells me something, that I have a big conscience. She pressured me into joining this hero program, and as much as I hate the concept of being a "hero", the guilt would eat me from the inside if it were any other way. It may not be the thing I want right now, but I'm stuck on this ride. So I might as well help out people like you along the way.

Amanda is awe-inspired.

He looks at the time on his phone. (2:54)

CHEYNE

Now... I gotta get back to the stadium. You're in the Preliminaries too, right? You should join me and my friends and watch the game.

AMANDA

That would be great, but I'm afraid I
can't. I've got my own round to
prepare for too, y'know.

He nods his head.

CHEYNE

Right. Well, I'm trying to embrace
with all this hero business, so I made
a few business cards, heh heh. If you
need a call,

Cheyne pulls out a business card with contact info. He hands
it to her.

CHEYNE

I gotchu.

4 INT. THE PRELIMINARIES- AFTERNOON

Jay and Zaire are now both seated again and the stadium is completely full except for one seat, which was reserved for Cheyne by his friends. Cheyne enters the stadium and sits himself down.

ZAIRE

Dang, man, what's the hold up? Wait!
Don't tell me... you were trying to
score... ;)

CHEYNE

I made a friend.

Jay notices the conversation and decides to jump in.

JERZEL

No need to hide it from **us**, man. We
all know you were looking for some.

Cheyne rolls his eyes and smiles. He acknowledges the bracket booklet.

CHEYNE

By the way, what's that in your hand?

Jay hands him the booklet.

JERZEL

Info booklet. It contains all the
"essentials" needed to do well in the
competition, including stuff like
bracket information.

JERZEL

Y'know what? You can just keep mine, I
won't need it. No matter who I'm up
against or what rules are set, I got
this in the bag.

CHEYNE

Can somebody say "cocky"?

ZAIRE

More like "hot-headed"! Get it? Hot-

CHEYNE

Anyway, let's see who I'm up against
first round.

Cheyne looks through the bracket placements only to come across a shocker. "Cheyne Ali Anderson" and "Amanda Toma" are set to fight in the first round in the third bracket.

CHEYNE

WHA?!

ZAIRE

I suppose that's the "friend" you were talking about? Amanda Toma? Name sounds exotic. She better be one fiery sista if you know what I'm sa-

Cheyne punches Zaire in a comical fashion.

CHEYNE

Not very "hero" behavior!

Zaire and Jay laugh at Cheyne.

A figure walks into the stadium via stairs below. It turns around to the audience, revealing itself as The Cosmic Spark. The audience gasps, and the episode ends.