

EXT. SUPER-TEEN CADET CORPS' BOOT CAMP, 30TH CENTURY CIRCA
1962 - DAY

That's right! Strap yourself in, because we're heading back to the 30th century of 1962 where we find the SUPER-TEEN CADET CORPS in the midst of basic training.

Full frame title page:

Across the top of the page runs the vintage banner:

"LEGENDS OF THE SUPER-TEEN CADET CORPS!"

Beneath the banner we see a stern looking Brain Child standing on the rim of her flying disc above the rest of the Corps.

BIG BROTHER, TWIN SET, KID KOMRADE, SUNNY BOY, LASER LADDIE, ATOM AUNT, and TUB-O-LAD stand at attention, shaking like green recruits as Brain Child berates them like the drill sergeant from "Full Metal Jacket."

BRAIN CHILD

Listen up, Cadets! Now that I'm running this outfit you will speak only when spoken to and the first and last words out of your filthy, stinking sewers will be "Sir"! Do you maggots understand?

CADETS

Sir, yes, sir!

CAPTION

Zounds! Do our ears deceive us? What could have turned Brain Child from a darling drill sergeant into a debutante dictator? Has the sweet, loving, girl-next-door leader of the Super-Teen Cadet Corps gone mad with power? Whatever her reason, Brain Child has unwittingly set forth a chain of events that will bring together a group of the most unlikely heroes ever to unite in defense of the earth! Who are they and will they be able to boost the sales of this comic enough to stave off cancellation? The answer lies in an off beat tale we call...

"STRANGERS ON A BRANE!"

Page Two and following:

Twin Set whispers to Big Brother:

TWIN SET

I never dreamed that Brain Child
would turn into "Mommy Dearest"!

BIG BROTHER

Careful! She can read minds...
remember?

Brain Child swoops down on the two Cadets.

BRAIN CHILD

I don't have to read minds to hear
what you three numbnuts are saying.

TWIN SET

Oops!

BRAIN CHILD

Now get inside and clean the head.
I want it so sanitary and squared
away that Lee Ermey himself would
be proud to go in there and take a
dump!

TWIN SET/BIG BROTHER

Sir, yes, sir!

They run off as Brain Child yells at the rest of the Cadets.

BRAIN CHILD

The rest of you ladies listen up!
You're a disgrace to the Cadet
Corps! You think you're heroes?
You're nothing but disorganized
pieces of primordial amphibian
slime! I don't care what planet
you're from. To me you're all
equally worthless. And I am going
to weed out each and every non-
hacker who does not pack the gear
to serve in my beloved Corps! Do
you maggots understand?

CADETS

Sir, yes, sir!

Suddenly, a flying tele-screen zooms in, broadcasting an image of a MILITARY COMMANDER.

MILITARY COMMANDER

Brain Child! This is General Brasstax of the World Science Police. We've just received intelligence that the evil space villain Robotron is orbiting the Earth's with an armada of kill-bots to attack the earth!

BRAIN CHILD

(thinking)

This is the moment I've been waiting for!

(speaking)

Message received, general. I'm on my way!

KID KOMRADE

Hey, what about the rest of us?

BRAIN CHILD

What makes you think you pack the gear to go on a mission? You maggots make me want to wretch! Until you are born again hard you're all grounded.

She hands them each a paper bag.

BRAIN CHILD

I want you to wear these paper bags over your heads in shame until I get back.

CADETS

Sir, yes, sir!

They all put the bags on their heads.

Brain Child has donned a spacesuit.

BRAIN CHILD

And if any of you maggots gets it in their heads to follow me you'll all be expelled from serving in my beloved Corps! Do you maggots understand?

CADETS

Sir, yes, sir!

Brain Child races up to space.

BRAIN CHILD (THINKING)

Everything's going exactly as I planned it. The poor dears... I really hate to yell at them like that. They must be terribly confused by my erratic behavior. I've always been such a sweet girl. But they will learn the truth soon enough.

Back on earth, the Cadets continue to stand silently with the paper bags over their heads. The ghostly figure of HUNKULES, a teen-idol super hero, hovers over Laser Laddie.

HUNKULES

Laser Laddie? Can you hear me?

LASER LADDIE

Ach! Who's there?

HUNKULES

It's me... Hunkules. I'm talking to you from Nowhere Land! Take that bag off your head. Hurry!

LASER LADDIE

But Brain Child said...

HUNKULES

She didn't mean it. It's all a big act.

Laser Laddie removes the bag.

LASER LADDIE

What?

HUNKULES

Listen! I was hanging around the barracks the other day when I saw Brain Child visited by herself from the future.

FLASHBACK: Brain Child is started by her future self.

HUNKULES

It was a warning! It said that a Cadet would die defending the Earth against Robotron.

LASER LADDIE

But Brain Child just left to battle Robotron alone!

HUNKULES

Well duh! Brain Child found the message, read it, then destroyed it before anyone else could see it, so she could make sure none of your lives were imperiled by Robotron's attack! She's planning to sacrificie herself instead!

LASER LADDIE

Then Brain Child isn't worse than Hitler! She's really a hero! I've got to stop her!

(he pauses)

Wait a minute! What do you mean you were "hanging around" the barracks?

HUNKULES

(nervous, shifty)

Nothing... I was just... Checking in on you guys. You know...

LASER LADDIE

"Checking in"? You mean spying on us?

HUNKULES

Well... not... you in particular...

LASER LADDIE

(getting it)

Hunkules! I'm shocked!

HUNKULES

<Sob!> You don't understand, Laser Laddie. I get so... <sob!>... lonely... in Nowhere Land.

Sunny Boy peeks out from under his paper bag. He sees Laser Laddie donning his anti-gravity suit. Hunkules vanishes.

SUNNY BOY

Who are you talking to, Laser Laddie? Hey! Where do you think you're going?

LASER LADDIE

There's no time to explain. I'm going after Brain Child.

ATOM AUNT

No! She'll be furious if you defy her orders.

Laser Laddie flies off.

LASER LADDIE

That's a chance I'm willing to take.

Atom Aunt turns to Sunny Boy.

ATOM AUNT

Great Galaxies! Is it possible he's found out that Brain Child is secretly in league with Robotron? What if she's gone to help him conquer the earth by sabotaging the Cadet Corps?

Sunny Boy shoots her an incredulous look.

SUNNY BOY

What are you on?

EXT. NOWHERE LAND

Hunkules is watching from Nowhere Land as Twin Set's multiple selves scrubs the barracks bathroom. The effect should be simple, like watching someone through a two-way mirror.

HUNKULES

That's it... Make it nice and clean.

TYPHON (OFF PANEL)

I bet you think you're pretty, clever... Don'tcha, kid?

Hunkules looks back over his shoulder and sees TYPHON.

HUNKULES

Typhon!

We see Typhon. He is the venom-dripping, lava-spewing monster of Greek Mythology.

Typhon grabs Hunkules and throttles him. The boy is helpless in his powerful grasp.

TYPHON

Oh, bad luck, kid. Talk about being in the wrong place at the wrong time. You know how much I hate Olympians. That and the fact that there's so few things to kill in this place. Beggars can't be choosers.

Before Typhon can squeeze the life from Hunkules, he is interrupted by PROMETHEUS, of Greek legend, who lounges lazily nearby.

PROMETHEUS

Talk about your classic transference of unresolved pre-adolescent childhood anger. I can refer you to a Reichian therapist in Vienna who can help you deal with that.

Typhon tosses an unconscious Hunkules aside and turns on Prometheus.

TYPHON

Prometheus! How dare you!

PROMETHEUS

OR --and this is what I propose-- We channel your energy toward a more healthy outlet.

TYPHON

And what would *that* be?

PROMETHEUS

(blithely offhanded)
Oh, I don't know... Say, killing Zeus himself for banishing us to this gods forsaken dimension?

This stops Typhon in his tracks.

TYPHON

(To us)
Well! Something *new* has been added!

EXT. SPACE

Robotron's armada approaches the earth. Brain Child races up to meet it. Behind her, Laser Laddie struggles to catch up.

BRAIN CHILD (THINKING)
 There's Robotron's ship now! Well,
 I guess this is it. Goodbye
 cruel...

LASER LADDIE
 Brain Child! Wait! You don't have
 to do this!

Brain Child glances back at Laser Laddie.

BRAIN CHILD
 Laser Laddie! How dare you disobey
 my orders! You little maggot! Now
 get back to earth before I call me
 some hard pipe-hitting magpies to
 get "Heckle and Jeckle" on your
 ass!

LASER LADDIE
 Okay... now aside the fact that
 this act of yours is really turning
 me on... Hunkules told me all about
 your little charade.

BRAIN CHILD
 (stunned)
 What? But how?
 (getting it)
 Ooo! The little peeping Tom!

Laser Laddie flies at Robotron's ship.

LASER LADDIE
 Now, stay back! I won't let you
 sacrifice your life for me and the
 others!

BRAIN CHILD
 Laser Laddie! No! Don't do it!

A distraught Brain Child watches in horror as Laser Laddie is struck by a deadly ray from Robotron's spaceship just as he destroys it with his lightning bolts.

BRAIN CHILD
 Oh no! Laser Laddie destroyed the
 invading armada, but was struck by
 a death-ray from Robotron's ship!

Brain Child snatches Laser Laddie from the exploding wreckage.

BRAIN CHILD

Hang on, Laser Laddie! With proper medical treatment, you'll... <sob!>... be all right.

LASER LADDIE

Who are you kidding? I'm done for, Brain Child. Don't cry... Better me... <gasp!>... Than you...

BRAIN CHILD

Is there nothing I can do?

LASER LADDIE

Yes... Talk like a drill sergeant... just one... more... time...

He dies and goes stiff from rigor mortis like a cartoon dog.

BRAIN CHILD

Noooooooo!

The lettering of Brain Child's wail flows off the page onto the next panel providing a transition to:

EXT. MOUNTEBANK MANOR - DAY

Welcome back to the 21st century. We're gazing on the lost splendor of a ramshackle mansion in the Old South. It is the Mountebank Manor and home to one of the oddest birds in the Retro-Age universe: FORBUSH FOURFLUSHER!

FORBUSH (OFF PANEL)

Noooooooo!

Forbush's wail picks up where Brain Child's leaves off.

INT. MOUNTEBANK MANOR, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Forbush has an arm buried deep inside a vault in the wall. Mosca, his parasite, cowers to the side.

MOSCA

What is it, Master Forbush? Is your arm stuck?

FORBUSH

No, you apple-polishing bootlick!
It's the boodle! My inheritance!
It's gone!

MOSCA

Gone?

FORBUSH

(weeping on the bust)

The money was doled out in such dainty portions I thought it would never end. But now there's nothing left! O Lord, why hast thou forsaken Forbush? What now, Mosca? What *now*?

(with trembling horror)

Might I have to... *work* for a living? The horror... The horror...

MOSCA

Surely, not you, sir! Labour and toil was never meant for a man of your vision, resources, and legendary stature.

FORBUSH

You've hit the nail on the head, Mosca! My name is a brand you can trust. So long as there are gullible souls to put their confidence in Forbush Fourflusher we need never want for anything.

(he pauses)

There! Can you feel the surge of brainwaves already swirling around you?

MOSCA

Your massive intellect has turned these humble ruins into a veritable *House of Ideas*!

FORBUSH

But this is the 21st century. Cynicism and mistrust abounds. Torture is the new black! I fear this isn't 1962, Mosca.

(he stops)

Wait! That's the answer! To the *time machine*!

He pushes a button as a section of the wall slides back revealing a spherical time machine. It is a simple glass bubble with two seats and dashboard.

Forbush and Mosca strap themselves in.

MOSCA

Where are we going, sir?

FORBUSH

The 30th century! Set the controls
for 1962!

MOSCA

1962, sir?

FORBUSH

Our destiny lies in the future of
the past. When life was simpler and
people put their trust in every
charlatan and mountebank that
strolled down the garden path.
Tally-ho! Up, up and away! Seventy-
six trombones! Boom, baby!

The time machine flashes brightly, and is gone.

EXT. SUPER-TEEN CADET CORPS' BARRACKS - DAY

A tearful crowd has gathered around the barracks, next to
which is a memorial statue of Laser Laddie. A sombre Cadet
Corps addresses them.

KID KOMRADE

(to the crowd)

And so we bid farewell to Laser
Laddie. Not only does the Earth
mourn your passing, but so too the
many civilizations throughout the
far-flung Island-universes who
lower their flags in tribute to
your lasting bravery and sacrifice.

They observe a moment's silence.

KID KOMRADE

(Brightly, to the crowd)

Well, he ain't getting any
deader... So I guess this means
there's an opening on the team. Who
wants to demonstrate his fantastic
abilities first?

TRANSISTOR TAD steps forward. He has a small radio tower
sprouting from the top of his head.

TRANSISTOR TAD

How about me? My transistor can pick up radio broadcasts from anywhere on earth, whether they originate from the past, the present, or the future.

KID KOMRADE

(feigning awe)

Really? Radio broadcasts! I'm trembling already. Hey! See if you pick up this news flash?

(he holds up a microphone and shouts into it)

NEXT!

Transistor Tad grabs his ears and winces. Everyone points their finger and laughs at Transistor Tad.

CROWD

<laughter>

A sudden flash dazzles everyone as Forbush's time machine appears. It lands right on top of Transistor Tad, crushing him like Dorothy's house landing on the Wicked Witch of the East. Everyone in the Cadet Corps and the crowd gasps!

ALL

<GASP!>

TWIN SET

Galloping Galaxies! That time machine just crushed Transistor Tad!

Everyone points and laughs.

ALL

<laughter>

Forbush leaps out of the time machine.

FORBUSH

Let the bells ring out and the banners fly! Master Forbush walks among mortals again!

KID KOMRADE

I'm sorry. You are?

FORBUSH

Forbush Fourflusher's the name and stardom's my game.

(MORE)

FORBUSH (cont'd)

Ah, what a tingly-wingly thrill it is to be in the company of the super-duper teens who defeated the likes of Kaynark and his Marvel-Pill, Megalo's Brain-in-a-Bottle, and that nameless electrical crook in a rubber suit.

TUB-O-LAD

Hey, that was my origin story, you know!

FORBUSH

Yes. And we're all terribly proud of what you've accomplished.

(weeping suddenly)

A moment please. I am overcome. Such dedication to duty demands a minute's silence!

SUNNY BOY

(to Forbush)

Alright, so you've boned up on the Cadet Corps. What's your business?

Forbush puts a finger to Sunny Boy's lips.

FORBUSH

Don't speak! That face! I must study that face!

He steps back and frames Sunny Boy's face with his hands as if viewing him through a camera lens.

FORBUSH

The heroic contours. The dashing smile. The noble profile. My boy have you ever wanted to be a star?

SUNNY BOY

The sun *is* a star.

FORBUSH

Oh wondrous innocence! Oh sweet naïveté!

(to Mosca)

Did I not say this far-flung age would be totally lacking in guile?

MOSCA

Your very being is its own vindication, sir.

FORBUSH

(to Sunny Boy)

I mean a star on *television*. I come with a message of glad tidings and profit sharing --although, I'll be the one sharing most of the profits... And probably not with you.

KID KOMRADE

The Cadet Corps generally shuns the spotlight.

FORBUSH

Ah, yes. Virtue is its own reward. Well, you're in luck, because virtue is all I'm offering you.

(sotto voce to Mosca)

Quick, Mosca, amend the contract accordingly.

BRAIN CHILD

Look mister ...

FORBUSH

(correcting her)

"Master."

BRAIN CHILD

Look, Master Forbush, if it's at all possible, could you please tell us what it is *EXACTLY* that you want?

FORBUSH

My dear Miss Toots! I'll do better than tell you what I want. I'll show you!

SMASH CUT directly to:

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO, GAME SHOW SET - PRESENT DAY

The Cadet Corps sits behind a judges' table on the old Gong Show set. They look very unsure about what they're doing there. Next to their table is the gong. Hanging on the gong is a padded mallet.

Mosca stands in center stage.

MOSCA

Face front, true believers! It's time to feast your baby blues on the man who's name is synonymous with excellence! The genius who single-handedly took credit for "The Fantastic Four-Flusher", "Arachnid Boy", and "The Incredible Funk"! The Man who Merrily Marched into your lives and won your hearts and minds! The Master! The Marvel! Forbush Fourflusher!

Forbush jogs onto the set looking like Richard Dawson, as the audience applauds. He leaps onto an over-turned soapbox in the center of the stage.

FORBUSH

Excelsior! Tonight we're offering ten lucky individuals the opportunity of a lifetime! Where super powers may mean super stardom for one lucky contestant who will take the place of Laser Laddie on the roster of the Super-Teen Cadet Corps.

A curtain opens revealing Laser Laddie's remains lying in a glass coffin. He still has rigor mortis. The Cadets are shocked. Brain Child leaps up in outrage.

BRAIN CHILD

Great galaxies! That's Laser Laddie! How dare you!

Forbush throws himself, weeping, on the glass coffin.

FORBUSH

We'll never forget the sacrifice of our fallen hero... Who died when he threw himself in front of Robotron's death-ray to save *me*.

BRAIN CHILD

That's a lie!

FORBUSH

Brave fellow! I can still hear your dying words to me.

BRAIN CHILD

He said his dying words to *me*...!
Not that I can repeat them in mixed
company.

FORBUSH

"Master Forbush," saith he. "Earth
needs a new hero to fight for the
future. Honor my memory by finding
such a one to take my place on the
Cadet Corps. Do it during prime
time over the course of thirteen
weeks, although twenty-two would be
better for the advertising
revenue."

BRAIN CHILD

Oh, he never...!

Forbush leaps up, beaming, the huckster in him taking center
stage.

FORBUSH

While death has closed the door for
one hero, it's opened it for
another. One man's exit is another
man's entrance. Opportunity knocks
on the lid of a coffin. Who will
take Laser Laddie's place in the
spotlight? Find out next on:

Forbush and the audience shout together:

FORBUSH/AUDIENCE

"WHO WANTS TO REPLACE A CADET
CORPSE?"

BRAIN CHILD

That's disgusting! We never agreed
to that title!

EXT. NOWHERE LAND

Prometheus sits across from Typhon.

TYPHON

Now, about this plan of yours.

PROMETHEUS

It's pretty simple, really.

He holds up a small doorknob.

TYPHON

A doorknob?

PROMETHEUS

Nowhere Land exists on a alternate *membrane*... a slice of higher dimensional super-string space stretched out to the size of a galaxy. Mount Olympus is actually right in front of us. We just can't see it or touch it, because it's on a parallel membrane in a lower, but separate, dimension. That's why no one has ever escaped Nowhere Land. It's not a matter of escaping this place. It's a matter of escaping this *universe*.

TYPHON

But Zeus was able to imprison us here. Which means he was able to open a door between the...

Typhon looks at the doorknob suddenly comprehending.

PROMETHEUS

Exactly.

TYPHON

With this I can take my revenge and kill Zeus for what he did to my family!

PROMETHEUS

Kill whomever you want, Typhon. Just leave the door open on your way out.

TYPHON

You know, I never seek revenge on an empty stomach.

PROMETHEUS

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. What can I get you?

TYPHON

Liver and onions. But forget the onions.

He leaps on Prometheus, pinning him to the floor. He sinks his teeth into his side and rips out his liver.

TYPHON

I like plenty of *irony* in my diet.

He stands over a writhing Prometheus, holding the doorknob.

TYPHON

See you in the funny pages.

He gives the doorknob a turn. With a "KLICK" he is gone.

Hunkules watches in hiding.

HUNKULES

This is terrible! I've got to warn
the Cadet Corps!

(Beat)

I'd better start with the girl's
dormitory...

Title and end credits:

"STRANGERS ON A BRANE" PART ONE: "EXCELSIOR!"

NEXT ISSUE: The Startling origin of the ALSO-TEEN CADET
CORPS! Don't miss: STRANGERS ON A BRANE, PART TWO: DANCIN'
WITH MYSELF...!