

Never Too Late #1  
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**PAGE 1**

1/ In a wide horizontal shot, we see Thom (still wearing the smoking jacket/robe from TTW) almost shyly (like a child having been caught in the act) explaining himself to someone off panel.

PRIME: There's no easy way to say this, but I'm going back for my ex-wife. In time! I'm going to go back in time to save her...from overdosing. It's for John -- I know I can't really make up for not being there for him all these years, but maybe this...

2/ Almost in response, we stay wide, but pan the focus around to Angie, who stands in silent rebuttal; arms crossed and eyebrow cocked. She seems full of attitude, challenging the super-man before her.

3/ Registering the supposed dismay at his words, Thom tries to reword, using his hands to try and divine the right thing that may quell Angie's silent ire.

PRIME: I mean...I was a hero, a SUPERhero for God's sake -- saving people is what I do. Sometimes, even at the risk of the whole world, you do all you can just to save that one...because you never know what that person will mean. Except, this time I do.

4/ Still wide, Angie moves into him, a finger to his lips, shushing him into submission. Despite his power and frame, this tender woman halts Thom on a dime.

PRIME: It won't solve anything, here -- she's already gone, but if I can just--

ANGIE: Shhhhhh...

**PAGE 2**

1/ We move in close to Angie, whose demeanor has shifted completely. Instead of the staunch stink eye, she's smiling, almost devilishly.

ANGIE: You love her. You always have and always should -- she's the mother of your son. That's not my question. What I don't understand is why haven't you done it already...?

2/ Obviously relieved, Thom can't help but bring Angie closer for a kiss -- strong and passionate.

3/ Pulling back, he relishes how lucky he is to have her by his side. With a hint of snark, she agrees, already having proven her greatness.

PRIME: I've been in love before, but never like you. I'm the luckiest man on Earth for that...

ANGIE: On ANY Earth. Now, go!

### **PAGE 3**

1/ We open to a large expanse of space -- the essence of a high-tech man-cave of superhero-like proportions: "glass" cases showing off collected oddities and weapons, newspaper clips adorning the walls and maybe even a statuette or two... At the entry way, we see Thom, now dressed in his Apex Prime uniform, stepping back into this hallowed hall. He's cleaned up, freshly shaven, free from the bush of a mustache we had grown used to.

2/ As he makes his way deeper into the space, he passes a few more trophy cases, these a bit more rooted in the established V:IP universe: Mr. Please Mask/ remote (The Villain), Power Mace (Origins Unknown), KillTech Heart (TTwL), Fear Flies (Spectrum), glowing rings of power (Ecolytes), Ol' Crazy's sword (Ol' Crazy & 40oz of Death).

3/ He stops, his image reflecting back at us faintly off the glass face of a showcase box. Within is the possibly the most powerful weapon on Earth -- a glove; absent its pair, but proudly standing, fingers outstretched as it waits to be worn.

### **PAGE 4-5 Spread**

*Panels 1-4 should spread across the top of the pages.*

1/ A hard close up on Apex Prime's eyes, scrutinizing the case. There's fierce, intense consideration -- like what he's doing is of the most grave circumstance.

2/ We move to the base of the showcase, a metallic stand with tech-oriented seams and nodes. A digital name plate, promotes the gloves assigned handle, "Hand of Fate", as well as scan results for active energy, ambient temperature and security status.

3/ Prime reaches for the showcase, a fixed finger ready to dial-in the registry to unlock it.

4/ But he pulls back, like a mortal man would withdraw from touching flame...hesitant and unsure. Something about this scares him and we're about to learn why.

5/ Spread wide -- across the entire expanse of two pages, we see a city suffering from IMMENSE devastation! Literal war had been waged on these city streets, the efforts and outcome spanning blocks in almost every direction. Crumbled cars, damaged buildings and

spots of fire surround a gaping crater at the epicenter and standing there, hoisting a prone man by the collar is Prime, years younger.

## **PAGE 6**

1/ Though bloodied and worn, CHRONILUS, the villain behind the ended fray, bellows and laughs maniacally.

CHRONILUS: ...hahahaha! Now THAT was a good time, don't you think! Hold on, I think I'm getting a second wind!

2/ Prime, almost pinning the hysterical madman with one hand, snatches the inactive Hand-Of-Fate gauntlet with the other.

PRIME: ENOUGH! I've had enough of you and this damn glove!

3/ As officers make their way in, taking Chronilus into custody, the time traveler continues raving!! Taking a moment, Prime peers at the strange glove, scrutinizing it with x-ray vision, trying to determine its properties and potential harm.

CHRONILUS: Enough? No...whole worlds are going to die because of you and that glove. I've seen it -- can't you? It's just a matter of time...get it...?

PRIME: What is it -- a bomb? Some sort of booby trap? Magic?

CHRONILUS: Worse. Destiny...YOUR destiny. You ARE the destroyer. Time won't tell...it already has!

4/ Sparked by one of the taunts, Prime snaps at the despot, barking his innocence in the twisted prophecy.

PRIME: You should've kept your mouth shut! If the glove is the key, then you've told me all I need to know to prevent anything from happening. NO ONE will wear this glove...I'll make sure of that.

5/ But as a sign of his lunacy, Chronilus continues jeering, through his beaten appearance -- the wildness of mania captured in his eyes!

CHRONILUS: Hahahaha! And you mean it too -- that's what's so great! So when the worlds end, you'll have no one to blame but yourself! Hahahaha!

## **PAGE 7**

1/ We're back in the serenity of the "man-cave", catching a hard shot of Prime's eyes. He's settled and relaxed, his sense of dedication fixed in a tight stare.

2/ Carefully, the encasement for the Hand of Fate unfolds around the glove, revealing it for the first time in ages.

3/ A close up of the fingers of the glove inflating as Prime wiggle his hand into position.

4/ Form-fitted, like it was always meant to be, the glove adheres to Prime's fist. He tenses, almost measuring the gauntlets strength against his own.

### **PAGE 8-9 Spread**

1/ An inset image, as Prime readies himself to go. Again, he's focused -- mission-oriented; despite years of not pursuing the hero life, he instinctively turns that diligence back on, like it had never left.

2/ Covering the expanse of both pages, Prime ignites the Hand of Fate! He reaches forward, with his his back to us, cape billowing in the winds created by the VORTEX manifesting from the glove. Not wholly unlike a Boom Tube, the tunnel has walls, membranes of chronal energy, bound together like webbing. In the pockets between, events, both past and future from the V:IP catalogue appear: Dr. Wonder jumps to attention in his labs as alarms sound about an energy spike. The Knight Watcher, barks orders in the face of a recruit. A woman, in an Amazonian toga is getting crowned by an unseen woman. The Gold Guardian fights a shadowed entity, using the Power Mace. Vantage has the armor suit forming around him. Smith seems to notice us through the vortex wall.

3/ Inset closeup of Prime's eyes as he clenches them tightly, trying to shield out the immense light the time tunnel is projecting; the brilliance of it obscuring some of his features.

### **PAGE 10**

1/ Still tight on his closed eyes, the light from the tunnel is beginning to subside, bringing back more lines of Prime's face.

2/ The light jumps even closer to normalcy, the tones of his skin now recognizable.

3/ We pull out, revealing Prime to be standing EXACTLY where we left him, in his trophy room. He takes a moment to soak this in, carefully looking around for what COULD have changed.

4/ He reacts in surprise when suddenly he gets his answer in the form of the security alarms blaring to life, shunting the room in hues of red.

## **PAGE 11**

1/ We close in on Prime's freshly shaved face, his lips pursed as he speaks the shutdown code for the security system.

PRIME: Voice recognition: Thomas Jefferson Smith. Stand down.

2/ Recognizing that his fast just wasn't fast enough, Prime's face curls into a slight scowl, anticipating the response to come.

PRIME: Dammit...not fast enough...

3/ And hit him it does, as an unseen force blasts into him in a rush, ripping him up off his feet!

PRIME: OOOOOOoooooffff!

## **PAGE 12**

1/ The force of the blow, overpowering Prime's strength and flight ability, throws him into a phalanx of security showcases. Glass, metal and the contents they contained, rain out in every direction as Prime's limp body plows through them.

2/ We turn the camera around, revealing the source of the blatant assault. Standing there, in the same clothes he wore just hours before is Thom, ready to dish out even more punishment to the assumed intruder.

THOM: The alarm was your second mistake; coming HERE was your first. Move and it'll be your LAST.

## **PAGE 13**

1/ Drawing himself up, Prime, seemingly unphased from the haymaker that sent him sprawling, begins to chastise Thom for the potentially over excessive use of force.

PRIME: What the hell were you thinking, punching someone like that?! It's been a while, but remember some restraint -- that punch could've LIQUIFIED a normal man.

2/ Unwavering from his initial threat, we close in on Thom, his demeanor even more stalwart -- eyes flaring red and barking a demand to know who Prime is.

THOM: You seem fine. Now who are you and what the hell are you doing in my house?

3/ Sitting up more, but not yet onto his feet, Prime addresses his younger self. He's wiping at his lip to make sure he's not bleeding, but there's a seriousness to his expression as though he knows he has to convince himself that what he's saying is the truth.

PRIME: Our house, you mean. I'm you...from a few hours from now.

THOM: Bullshit.

PRIME: Figured you'd say that...just like the forty OTHER things you're considering, but we don't have time for that right now.

4/ From the same position, Prime holds up his fist, still adorned in the Hand of Fate glove. This is his gambit -- his hail mary, and he plays with the confidence of champion.

PRIME: So, let's skip to the most important one: How did I get HERE? With this.

## **PAGE 14**

1/ With a quick glance, Thom looks over to his own trophy case where the Hand of Fate still sits behind the security of glass, untouched and idle.

2/ Finally making his way up to his feet, adjusting his cape as he moves, Prime continues talking Thom through what's happening right now. It's almost a power play -- the older Prime, attempting to use the advantage of truly being older to talk down his younger self.

PRIME: Yours is there -- it's fine. You can check it if you'd like, though, I don't know what having two in the same vicinity would do. Hell -- I wasn't sure what having the two of us--

3/ But the gravity of what Prime has done is too great for Thom to sit idly through and we close in on him as he cuts loose, luckily, with words this time.

THOM: HAVE YOU LOST YOUR FUCKING MIND?! Check it? I don't want to touch it -- and if you WERE me, neither would you!

4/ Thom stands, almost leering towards Prime, like he's moments away from pummeling him out of simple frustration -- his shoulders are hunched forward, his eyes wide with exclaim. Prime's position has been taken, no longer as in control as he sought to be.

THOM: So, whatever you are -- clone, robot, WHATEVER -- you've had your chance to get ready for what's coming next!

PRIME: Easy...easy...I know. I -- we, said we would NEVER use it. That we would keep it safe, from Chronilus or anyone else. But if I would use it, so would you...what's one reason you would?

5/ Inset shot of Thom turning away, beckoned by the voice calling to him from behind. It almost seems to catch him off guard, not quite frightening him, but close to it.

ANGIE(Off panel): Thom...!

## **PAGE 15**

1/ In a wide shot, stretching the top of the page, we see Angie, brandishing her firearm and waiting behind the wall of the entrance. She's serious, ready to breach if her husband only says the word -- despite even her years away from it, she's still very much a cop.

ANGIE: Is everything okay?

2/ Still in a wide shot, we see Thom taking to the air a bit, leaving Prime behind him, as he makes his way back to his wife. There's a sense of concern, but also of sudden understanding.

THOM: Angie, sweetie...hold on...everything's fine, but just...hold on...

3/ Gently, pushing her gun away, Thom talks to her, trying to prepare her for what she's about to see. Angie looks a bit confused, not quite sure of what Thom is trying to say.

THOM: I don't want you freak out or anything...but it appears we have a visitor.

ANGIE: A visitor? But the alarms went off and you tore ass down here -- I thought it was--

THOM: I know...but...well, see for yourself.

4/ Angie steps around Thom, looking into expanse of the trophy room, but the sight what she sees is enough to shock her into near silence.

ANGIE: Omigod...Thom...it's you!

## **PAGE 16**

1/ Prime is up now, carefully picking up items knocked over from the intense greeting Thom offered. It's a sweet gesture, considering he didn't exactly make the mess, but it shows how dedicated he is to coming back and fixing things.

PRIME: Well, not quite. As I was I trying to explain to Sir Punch Fists, I'm from the future -- not far. Just a few hours from now.

2/ With his arms crossed defensively across his chest, Thom cuts the distance between Angie and Prime. He's put together what he believes to be the reason, but he wants some form of confirmation, just to be sure.

THOM: And now you can finish explaining why you're here. What happens to Angie -- what was so bad that it you used that glove?

ANGIE: Me?! Wait -- he used the glove?! I thought you said--

3/ Focusing back on Prime, but going wide enough to show him repositioning one of the security stands, we see him look over his shoulder to regard the couple as he speaks. He looks a little exasperated -- he lead Thom to this conclusion, but it's not quite accurate and far too close to a lie for his tastes.

THOM: I never said anything about Ang. But you admit there's at least one reason you'd be tempted to use it. Let me give you another two: John and Melissa. In just a few hours, unless we fix this, John is going to come here -- he's going to come for you. Because of his mother.

4/ We turn back to Thom, with Angie just over his shoulder -- he's got a look of disdain, simply from the mention of his ex-wife. Angie, who is ever observant, looks solemnly, already having pieced together what her husband has overlooked by Prime's presence.

THOM: Oh god. Typical, what has she done now?

ANGIE: Thom, don't be cruel...isn't it obvious? She's died. And he's come back to save her.

## **PAGE 17**

1/ In an establishing shot, that mimics the one from The Trouble w/Love, we see Prime's old home. Even accounting for the cloudy day, it's not quite as shiny and well kept as it once was, with more than a few places lost to neglect.

2/ In a wide shot of the front door, we focus on a hand twisting the key for the deadbolt lock.

3/ From inside the house, the door opens to reveal Melissa, alive, carrying a full, brown grocery bag. She looks disheveled; hair slightly a mess with ill-fitting clothes that look haphazardly put on.

## **PAGE 18-19 Spread**

*Panels 2-4 should run along the bottom of the pages.*

1/ In a WIDE SHOT, spreading across both pages, we see a view of the living room -- it's not quite hoarders bad, but there's refuse, clothes and random things strewn all over the place. The place is generally a mess, which we kind of saw in various spots from TTWL. Still clutching the grocery bag, Melissa makes her way through, navigating the rubble in her path.

2/ She enters the kitchen, which hasn't fared much better: a few stockpiles of dirty dishes and empty bottles, carry-out containers and newspapers.

3/ On the counter, next to the refrigerator, she sets the bag down. Its heavy, definitely full, the weight of the contents practically pushing through the paper.

4/ Close in on the top of the bag as Melissa pulls a bottle of alcohol from its inside, like a magician's rabbit.

## **PAGE 20**

1/ Reaching up, shifting off balance just a bit, she positions the bottle to fit into the cabinet.

2-4/ We're seeing the cabinet, through the passage of minutes, filling up with more and more bottles of liquor, placed on their side, bottoms out, in a stacked pyramid.

5/ Holding the last one, Melissa stops to twist open it's top. It's almost ritualistic, her process -- restock and then her prize.

6/ Like a ghost, she turns and sways away, bottle in hand. She leaves the brown bag where it sat, empty and now apart of the rest of the rummage of the kitchen.

## **PAGE 21**

1/ In a tight cropped shot, getting the essence of her silence and loneliness, we watch her ascend the stairs, coming towards us.

2/ Lost to her own thoughts, she moves - zombie-like; in emotional auto-pilot, turning into her bedroom.

3/ She stops at her bedside, falling to her knees, but careful not to spill her bottle. There's still a blankness to her expression -- a vastness that encapsulates everything.

## **PAGE 22**

1/From under the bed, we spy her pawing for a square, wooden box -- a few trifles of its contents extending out beyond its frame. Almost hidden behind the box is the futuristic gun that John used in TTwL.

2/ With nimble fingers, she pulls the box out, sliding it across the wood floor. From this angle, we can see that it's a storage of keepsakes: photos and news clippings of various sizes.

3/ We close in on her face -- her blank, emotionless face -- as she looks over the surplus of memories.

4/ Impassionately, she grabs a framed photo from the mix, shuffling a few random items aside as she pulls it free.

5/ Quietly -- woefully, she looks down on the image. Her hair hangs like the leaves of a willow, creating an organic halo around her face.

## **PAGE 23**

1/ In a full splash page, slightly off-center to match the feeling of discontent she feels, we close in on the framed photo. The glass of the frame has a wicked crack and the wood has more than a few pock marks and scratches from various forms of abuse over the years. The pic itself is of her and Thom; a captured moment of them happily in love, staring blissfully into each other's eyes. A moment that seems so far away...

## **PAGE 24**

1/ We zoom hard on Melissa's eyes that for the first time show signs of life, welling over with tears. Her brow furrows hard to hold it all back, but it's just a matter of time before they give way.

2/ And fall the tears do; heavy drops that rain down on the picture frame, cascading down the glass front.

3/ We close out, pulling back a bit, showing the picture flip over into her lap as she tips the bottle back, gulping the numbing liquid inside.