

It was everything Greg could do not to show his anxiety. Since the revelation of Bloodmoon beating the Simurgh like it owed her money – and good God, were the resultant memes glorious – he knew they'd need to analyze the bodycam footage. But he didn't have the courage to watch it by himself. For all Greg knew, he might get a *The Ring* situation and hear Taylor whispering "Seven days" in his ear. In which case he'd definitely want Sophia with him since Taylor liked her less. Maybe she'd chase Sophia instead, he thought with dark humor.

Eventually the jock girl showed up and they gave the usual platitudes to Greg's mom. "Nice to see you again; no thanks, I'm not hungry; of course we won't get up to anything untoward." From the subtle smirk his mother gave to Sophia's retreating back, he suspected she had entirely the wrong idea. Did she think he and Sophia were going to start dating? That perhaps the jock had a crush on the nerd and couldn't figure out how to express it?

No thanks. He'd rather not be a punching bag in his personal time as well, thank you very much.

The pair sat down on Greg's bed and he opened his laptop. "I don't think I have to ask if you've seen the reports from the last Endbringer fight."

Sophia's returning laugh was soft, tittering, slightly unhinged. "No, I saw it. Bloodmoon brutalized that evil bitch more than anyone, maybe even more than Scion..."

Greg didn't need her to elaborate. The idea that someone that dangerous was in their city, and probably still held a grudge against Sophia... They didn't say much more, Greg calling up the footage he'd uploaded to his computer.

"She looks good," Sophia commented when the camera first captured Taylor's appearance. "Sharp, awake," she quickly clarified. "The bags under her eyes look gone. Look how she holds herself: total confidence. Fuck, why doesn't she act like this in school? If she did..."

"Then you wouldn't have picked on her for a year?" Greg interjected, feeling uncharacteristically bold.

Oddly, Sophia confirmed it with a soft nod and a grunt. "If Taylor had acted like this from the start, I'd have done my best to steer Emma away. Or maybe ditched Emma if she was dumb enough to pick a fight with somebody like this."

"You have a lot of problems," Greg said simply. She whacked him in the back of the head. Since she was already hitting, he chose not to bring up the fact that she'd been calling the girl Taylor instead of Hebert ever since the riot.

The two watched the footage, Greg's occasional jittery motions as well as his rotation to get more of Taylor's room recorded. His stammering defense made Sophia chuckle until the black girl's jaw dropped. "No fuckin' way... Veder, you made Taylor blush!" She started laughing. "Big scary monster and she still gets flustered when the nerd says she's pretty!"

Sophia spent the next hour or so needling Greg about his crush on Taylor while the footage ran on, nothing in particular standing out to either of the observers. Until that fateful moment.

As Greg's voice rambled on about the idea they'd been bandying back and forth, Taylor very deliberately looked straight into the button camera and gave a knowing smirk. To the observers, it felt like they were staring straight into her hazel eyes.

Someone shrieked. Greg couldn't say who. The laptop clattered to the floor. His heart was pounding and he had a bad case of tunnel vision, adrenaline pumping worse than any time he'd gotten beaten up at Winslow. He squeezed his arms around the sniffling figure. For at least a minute he could do nothing more than shudder. Finally his body shifted out of panic mode and he could register more around him.

There was someone in his lap. Their arms were wrapped around each other, squeezing hard enough to limit circulation. Tears were running down Sophia's face, and she was biting her lip hard enough to draw blood. He drew in a breath to say something, anything, probably something stupid that would get him hit.

"She saw me." Sophia preempted his own words. Her voice was shaky, choked with still more tears. "She looked right into my eyes. I know she saw me. Somehow, she was looking at me. She knows we were watching her..."

Gregory Veder did something next that he'd never expected he would ever do. Not with anyone, especially not with Sophia Hess. He made soft soothing noises in his throat and the back of his mouth, gently turning her so she could bury her face in his shoulder. Sophia shook, trying to get ahold of herself, hiding from her own weakness in the shirt of someone she'd seen as lower than the dirt beneath her shoe not two months prior.

At length, she spoke again, voice muffled as she refused to lift her head. "...If you tell anyone about this, I'll kill you. That's not an idle threat or an exaggeration. I will stab you in the throat and chest until your ragged breathing stops."

"Shut the fuck up and just be scared," Greg whispered, resting a hand on the back of her head.

Sophia growled, which turned into another hiccup as she did her best to abort a sob. Veder was such an idiot. Couldn't even be scared right. She still couldn't disengage her arms from their vise grip around Veder's torso, so she opted to suffer in silence.

Until Greg broke that silence. "...So she knows. What do we do now?"

"Either we pretend none of this ever happened, or we have to talk to her. And... And I think we're too deep to pretend."

He swallowed hard. "I'll...I'll ask her to meet up. What do we even do, though? We still have no clue what's making her act like this."

"I could try to take pictures of her diary, see if we can learn from that. Otherwise? We'll just have to ask her. It's not like we can keep this a secret anymore."

Neither of them moved from their position. They were natural enemies brought together by a mutual need. And in shared terror, they'd found an island of safety. The very idea of facing the source of their fear made them cling to this brief illusion of comfort.

(BREAK)

## Welcome to the Parahumans Online Message Boards

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### ◆Topic: Massive Success in Latest Endbringer Battle!

In: [Boards](#) ► [News](#) ► [Breaking News](#) ► [Endbringers](#)

**Bagrat** (Original Poster) (The Guy in the Know)

Posted on February 25, 2011:

Excuse my lack of typical eloquence, folks: I've just put together the information from various leakers and informants, and I'm too excited to take the time and be flowery. This is the first Simurgh attack that hasn't required a city to be quarantined, because it only took seventeen minutes to drive her off – with unprecedented damage to the Endbringer, to boot! Parahuman experts will have plenty to study in her severed wing.

The hero of the hour isn't one of the Triumvirate or even Scion, either. Instead, nearly all of the credit goes to a relative unknown, a murderous vigilante called [Bloodmoon](#), out of an American East-coast city called Brockton Bay. According to my sources, this girl "beat Ziz like it owed her money" and getting killed only made her come back angrier!

I'd recommend that all new information on Bloodmoon be placed in her own thread linked above, while this thread is for celebration and discussion of exactly what happened in Canberra. While obviously we can't distribute footage from the battle and even still shots are frowned upon, there were plenty of people who can give eyewitness stories and I welcome you to do so!

Edit: The city of Canberra is building a statue in Bloodmoon's honor and offering her Australian citizenship! Also, there's a [meme thread](#) for the fight. More than a few have made me almost pee myself laughing!

► **Reave** (Verified PRT Agent)

Replied on February 25, 2011:

And once again, Bagrat manages to get in before the PRT can properly form a press release. I feel the need to point out, for any Brockton natives, Bloodmoon has quite the body count so I don't recommend trying to get her autograph or otherwise meet her in person. Keep your eyes open for the official statement that will be a little more detailed and better-collated than this thread.

Edit: [Official statement thread](#)

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◆**Topic: Bloodmoon**

**In: Boards ► News ► Vigilantes ► America**

**Brocktopus**

Posted on February 8, 2011:

I've never gotten the chance to post one of these before! So the rumors that have been running around turned out to be true: we have a new villain in the Bay, but at least this one seems to be focused on hunting other villains. Links to the previous threads about [ABB](#) and [E88](#) massacres. Maybe he'll hit the Merchants next? Edit: He hit the Merchants and wiped them out! Edit 2: Bloodmoon is a she!

What we know so far:

**Appearance** – Relatively tall and very slender, wearing typically Victorian/Edwardian clothing and using weapons that reflect the same time period. Long hair in a ponytail, still falling to mid-back. Black and somewhat curly. Edit: Daytime sightings have added dark-lensed goggles to the outfit.

**Powers** – Most likely a grab-bag cape. Seems to exhibit superhuman strength and speed, but not to Glory Girl or Velocity levels. Tough enough to take bullets and shrug them off. May also be a minor Tinker or backed by one, since the weapons and equipment aren't normal. Weapons include a weird saw that opens up into an axe/glaive thing, an ancient pistol that should be single-shot but isn't, and a dagger that can split into two daggers somehow. Edit 2: Bloodmoon also has a whip-sword like Ivy from Soul Calibur.

Adding a new paragraph for this edit because holy crap. In the attack on the Merchants, Bloodmoon wielded an exploding hammer, a flamethrower, and some other weapon that couldn't be easily identified but punched through Squealer's vehicle plating like it was tissue paper. Also lost most of his head and only stopped long enough to RIP A MAN IN HALF and somehow used that gore to heal his head.

Edit 3: Holy shit, I'm not sure if I should even bother. Go to the [PRT/Australian press release](#) to get a better analysis. I'm just a Brocktonite who was eager to post something important. So Bloodmoon can die and keep coming, has some sort of giant energy greatsword, a cannon like off an old pirate ship that she wields like a sawed-off, a sword made from blood that can fuck up the Simurgh and cut through apartment complexes with a single swing, oh, and a weird double-sword that made eyewitnesses feel AS IF GOD WAS LOOKING AT THEM AND HE WAS ANGRY! Oh, and she can fire energy balls that can disintegrate city blocks!

Another edit: apparently we've managed to get Bloodmoon moved from the Villain category to Vigilante. I guess when you show up to an Endbringer fight, get killed and then avenge your own death while saving an entire city, it does a lot for positive rep. Not that she doesn't deserve the title. She's saved a lot of people here in BB, to say nothing of the lives she saved in Canberra from death and quarantine.

► **PistolPackinMama** (Cape Wife)

Replied on February 8, 2011:

Oh great, just what we need. Another killer on the streets. Sure, he seems to be focused on the gangs for now, but for how long?

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Lisa felt her mouth drier than sand as she compulsively clicked through the various threads regarding Bloodmoon. There was no way that Coil would let her and the rest of the team simply retire. If he was in his right mind, he might try to leverage them into becoming heroes. But Coil was becoming more erratic day by day and her power stuttered when she tried to determine the cause. Some deep-seated instinct told her not to dig deeper into what was keeping her power from working, and for once she listened to the urge not to root out secrets.

There was no way to know how Coil would react to pressure now: the psychological profile she had been slowly building (and getting occasionally stymied) was almost worthless now, as he was behaving in entirely different ways. The only consistency was that he wouldn't hesitate to kill her if he suspected her of acting against him. She needed outside help. New Wave was too focused on the black-and-white of hero work to ever rescue the Undersiders, regardless of what sob story she could spin. Accord still had a pleasant working relationship with Coil, at least as far as Lisa knew, and she probably couldn't afford his intervention regardless. The Protectorate were compromised and, for all that Coil himself was falling apart, his network was still strong.

Perhaps she could contact the Elite, offer them most of Coil's assets on a silver platter if they'd intervene and let the Undersiders walk away. Bastard Son would be most willing to travel and start a fight, but he was also the one most likely to renege on the deal.

*"Where's my money!? You gonna give me my money!?"* The sound of the classic Family Guy scene echoed from the living room, along with laughter. Surprisingly genuine laughter from Alec.

*Amusement derived from violence but also from an injection of hope. Rather than being simply driven off, Simurgh was properly beaten and prevented from achieving any goal. Well, Alec, you might be on your way to becoming a real boy...*

Closing her tabs, Lisa headed out to the living room. The scene of Stewie beating Brian had headshots of Bloodmoon and the Simurgh superimposed over the characters, and Alec continued to chuckle. "Whatcha watchin'?" Lisa asked, as if she didn't already know, sitting down to join in enjoyment of memes and distract herself from the danger in their future.

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Tobias Marchand fidgeted on his cot. He wasn't a drug addict like those American thugs Coil also had on his payroll: Tobias' team was far more professional. Their group had originally earned its pedigree in the Bush War of Rhodesia, and since then had only accepted the best and most focused killers, military-minded men who could follow an objective and sit on an asset for days or even weeks at a time without feeling the urge to shoot something.

Had there been a leak? Some sort of addictive substance in the vents? Immense amounts of histamine? His entire body itched, his hair hurt – especially the hair on his body. His teeth felt both loose and too tightly packed together. He got up and marched down the hall to ring his employer's office and see what was being done about this.

Tobias Marchand fidgeted on his cot. He remembered his intent to go to Coil's office and speak with the man, but couldn't remember how he'd gotten back to his room. As a violent shudder overtook his body, he laid down and curled up, suddenly and deeply afraid.

(BREAK)

Most of the villains laid low after Endbringer fights. The Empire in particular was quiet, their leadership deciding what was to be done regarding a force of nature like Bloodmoon.

Common crime, however, continued. And with the gangs silent, street thugs who would otherwise be part of the Merchants or pressured to join one of the gangs – or get gone from the Bay – took the lull in activity to line their pockets. For the majority, this took the form of looting, mugging, murder and rolling the corpses.

However, there was a strange bonfire in the Docks area, relatively near Bloodmoon's first appearance when she had attacked the ABB dropping-off point. Guns were fired off and screams filled the air. As the police gathered their forces for a confrontation, someone else intervened before the cops could put their lives on the line.

Equipped with her classic pistol and cleaver, Bloodmoon hacked her way through these armed thugs. In the center of the revelers was a pile of undulating bodies, a group of men violating a woman. Bloodmoon ripped them apart with her bare hands to avoid harming the woman at the bottom of the crush of bodies.

The sobbing, violated woman threw herself at the cape, fulfilling the plan. Valefor's final order coursed through the woman's mind and she whispered into Bloodmoon's ear, "Thank you." She stepped back, presenting the photograph with one hand while the other unfolded the straight razor that had been hidden in her hand. She made to cut her own throat but Bloodmoon was far too fast. Something happened, and Valefor's control over the woman frayed and snapped. She fell unconscious.

Filing away what had happened for sharing with any PRT agent brave enough to talk with her, Bloodmoon continued slaughtering the armed psychopaths. That photograph was likely important, dangerous. The pale woman in all white, face sallow and hair long and limp, disappeared as Bloodmoon destroyed the photo.

(BREAK)

Their matriarch had been seizing out, screaming and thrashing, for more than an hour. No-one knew what to do, how to help. What could they do when Mama Mathers was unable to give them orders?

At last Mama arched violently, taking in a long and desperate breath, before collapsing back onto the bed to which her adherents had move her. Her breath came in deep heaves, the gasps of someone who had nearly suffocated.

Slowly, shakily, her hands rose toward the ceiling. "G...glory," she panted. "Glory Hallelujah... My children, God has revealed Herself to me. Greater even than Her angels that we have venerated..."

The emaciated woman suddenly leapt to her feet, a manic energy infusing her every motion. “Gather the family! Every last man, woman and child! Every killer, slut and eunuch! We’re going on a pilgrimage!”