

WONDER CITY STORIES

VOLUME 4:

WHOSE DREAMS COME
TRUE

BY JUDE MCLAUGHLIN

EPISODE #3

L'illusion des sosies

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L'illusion des sosies

"Ira!"

Ira Feldstein came into the living room at the best jog a fit 87-year-old could manage. The last time Andrea had used that urgent tone, she'd just fallen and broken her hip. However, this time, she was sitting in her favorite pink overstuffed chair, leaning forward, pointing at the television and staring at him in horror.

"What, what?" he said, looking her over worriedly, and, noticing her vehement gestures toward the screen, finally looked.

There was a quartet of young people on the television, all wearing what looked like the emergency coveralls most of the superhero teams carried in case of clothing malfunctions. There was a damaged, flaming building in the background, with a couple of fire companies working on putting it out. A young black woman looked into the camera, and the back of Ira's neck went cold. "Is that... the Riveter? Alice Anderson? Wait, didn't she die a few years ago?"

"Keep watching," Andrea said grimly, pushing a blue-veined hand through her white hair.

Ira wasn't even listening to the newscaster babbling in the foreground—he was squinting hard at the people in the coveralls. A woman—she was tiny, looking almost like a teenager to Ira—with red hair and freckles shifted into view and after a moment, he said, "Grace O'Massive?"

"I think you're right," Andrea said, squinting. "Tiny thing isn't she?"

"She's been gone... let me think... since the 90s?" Ira said. "And that—" he pointed at the tall man with a singularly big nose and jughandle ears—"that's Vern O'Neill, Punchout's son, the one who died in Vietnam."

The young man talking to Vern then turned to scowl toward the reporter, and Ira staggered backward to fall hard into his own chair. "But... but... but..."

His wavy dark hair dropped a curl across his forehead, and when one of the women (Grace?) said something to him, he flashed a stunning movie-star smile down at her.

"He's a few years younger than when I first saw him," Andrea said, "but he's definitely..."

Ira gasped, "Me!"