

Title: Run So Fast (Part One) "Recovery"

Based on: Sonic Adventure by Sonic Team for the Sega Dreamcast

Writer: ALM

Written: March 21, 2000

No hammer. No hammer. I don't NEED the hammer," Amy Rose mutters as she rolls back and forth in her bed. Sweat beads on her forehead and she groans feverishly for a moment. "I can take all of you on mySELF. No Sonic. No Tails. No hammer. Barehanded ... barehanded ..."

"Could you PLEASE be quiet?" A gruff voice calls out of the dark corner of the room. "I can't sleep with your babbling."

"HUSH!" A woman scolds the man, a light slap is heard. "The girl is feverish. She's been through a lot."

"We've ALL been through a lot, Mona!" the man responds sharply. "I should at least expect to be able to get a little sleep!"

"As should she. More so, because she's sick. Now be quiet." The woman hisses at him, then falls silent. She begins humming a tune to herself.

The man frowns in the darkness and leans against the wall of the dank apartment. "Stupid Sonic the Hedgehog ... " He grumbles, folding his arms over his chest. He mutters to himself angrily, trying to drown-out the sound of Amy's incessant babbling.

Station Square - Post Chaos (Three Weeks)

The water drained from the city, eventually. The citizens of Station Square were forced to face a city ruined from the floods. Most of the buildings were unrecoverable, and if they didn't crumble on their own, they had to be torn down. Older buildings, made long ago to survive nuclear winter, held up better. The citizens who remained the city were assigned rooms in these buildings to live in until more hospitable shelters were completed and the city on its way to being rebuilt. But that would still be a long way off.

A small but densely populated city of several hundred thousand, over the course of three weeks, had been reduced to only about 50,000 souls. Well over half the population was drowned during Chaos's attack. Many more found residences in other cities shortly after being rescued by the Burning Rangers (the only emergency response team properly equipped to deal with the mess that was left of Station Square--and of course the first ones on the scene and the last to leave). When all was done, those who chose to stay lived on the rooftops of the tallest buildings, or on floating relief centers, until the water level came back down.

They hate Sonic, now. All of them.

"Look at what he let happen!"

"To our city!"

"To US."

Amy fell silent. She wanted to defend Sonic, but didn't. She couldn't.

Not after he did what he did. He saved them from Chaos, yes. Yet, that was as much the result of Amy and Sonic's other friends as it was of him. It was her love for him, her faith, which allowed him to harness the positive power of the Chaos emeralds.

It was what he did afterwards that shocked her so much: he LEFT.

He didn't help rescue the countless drowning people, find the missing children, or reunite loved ones. He just left.

Maybe he deserved some rest. It couldn't have been easy to beat Chaos. He must have been tired. He had to go. To regain his strength. Something like that.

Every day, while Amy watched the Burning Rangers dive under water to look for survivors in the buildings, she would think to herself: "Sonic can do that! Sonic WILL do that. She would keep her eyes peeled to the horizon, hoping to see him riding on the Tornado with Tails to come to everyone's aid.

But he didn't.

Eventually, Amy was tired of waiting for him, and the rescue efforts had been going for a couple days. By then, there was little hope of any more survivors being found. Buildings were still collapsing, sinking into the water eerily. Amy was watching one slip under the surface. She was sitting on the edge of one of the rescue boats, listening to a woman crying: "That was my home! My children are still in there! My children are still in there!" The woman ran to Amy's side of the boat and tried to climb up on the railing. Amy held her back. The woman just kept wailing about her children being trapped in the building. Amy knew those kids were gone. She knew the woman was in shock. A couple of officers came and calmed the woman down. One of them thanked Amy and gave her a butterscotch candy. She wasn't sure why he did that. She just stuffed it in her pocket and ran below deck. She spent the rest of her time down there, in the deepest, darkest parts of the ship, until the water level came down and she could live in the city again. That's when she caught a cold.

Amy was terrified of going back to the deck of the ship. Even when she realized she was sick, she stayed as far away from people as possible, only occasionally appearing in the mess to grab some food and then disappearing again. Once the fever hit, Amy became very delirious. She sometimes thought she heard the children who drowned in the building scratching the hull of the ship, or calling for help. Those nights she felt like she wanted to die. As her sickness progressed she just became more and more delirious.

And now here she is. Stricken with pneumonia of some sort in the basement of an old elementary school. There are two people in this area with her. Mona, a 50 year-old woman and her husband, Archer, 53. Mona requested that she be allowed to care for the ailing young hedgehog because "She reminds me of my daughter, all grown up with a family of her own." Archer resents the duty ... he resents Sonic the Hedgehog.

They all do.

...

Sitting beside Amy's cot, Mona draws a damp hand towel across Amy's forehead. Her fur is all matted and dirty from because of the sweat and grime of the surroundings. "This reminds me of when Erika got so ill, oh, seventeen years ago, I suppose." She smiles down at Amy in remembrance.

Archer walks behind Mona. He rests his hand on her shoulder and looks at Amy. "Erika's human," he sniffs, his grip tightens on his wife's shoulder.

Mona winces slightly. "This one has done nothing to us, for heaven's sake. And she had no one to care for her."

"Her kind didn't take care of us."

Mona is silent a moment. She looks at Amy, her eyes are shut tight, her mouth in a painful scowl. Mona shakes her head, thinking about the pain that Amy must be going through. She shuts her eyes to fight back some tears, then looks up at her husband: "This is not the time for hating people. Would you have appreciated it if someone took you attitude to Erika when she was like this? Would you have liked it for someone to say she DESERVES to be so ill because of something someone ELSE did?"

Archer mutters a curse at his wife and storms off. "I'm going to the kitchen to see if there's anything left for us," he adds, throwing open the cellar door and stomping up the stairs, leaving the door swinging softly.

Mona shakes her head. "You just ignore him, dear," she says kindly to Amy. "He's very upset, now. Things'll get better in time."

Amy hears Mona's assuring words. She can not fully understand them in her state, and she can't respond, but she does hear her.

"Ignore him," Amy repeats in her addled mind. Unfortunately, since she's been ill for as long as she's been in contact with Mona and her peevish husband, she's been in her feverish daze. Unaware of who these two people are, they're nothing more than disembodied voices. She doesn't know that "Ignore him" is a suggestion made in reference to Archer. In Amy's mind's eye, she sees Sonic the Hedgehog as she keeps repeating those words. "Ignore him, ignore him, ignore him," simple delirious repetition turns into determined behavior. "I'll ignore him, I'll ignore him, I'll ignore him," her image of Sonic slowly fades into a dark recess. His once bright, heroic smile turns into a dismal scowl. The emerald green eyes dull to lifeless specks in his face.

"I hate Sonic," Amy says in a low, raspy voice as she turns over in the bed. "I hate him."

"No, no, you can't mean that," Mona responds automatically. She's just surprised to hear Amy say anything with any sense of conviction. Although weary, Mona was shocked by the venom conveyed in Amy's tone.

"It's not right to go about hating people. It's not right for Archer to do it, or for you, especially in your condition," she strokes Amy's cheek with the back of her hand.

"Sonic hates all of you, that's why he abandoned everyone." Amy continues deliriously. "You'll see. He's not the hero he pretends to be. He couldn't even accept the affection of a little girl. What kind of shining example of a person is that?"

"Nobody's perfect."

"I just wanted to love him. He didn't really have to love me back. He at least had to accept that I loved him. He didn't need to reject me the way he did. That's not right. Someone who will risk life and limb to beat Eggman shouldn't have any trouble just letting me love him! There's nothing difficult about that. If I wanted to love Eggman I bet he wouldn't have had any trouble and I bet of anyone he'd probably have the most trouble because he's always in trouble and Sonic is always the one who stops him so he probably really hates ... hedgehogs ... like everyone does ... even me," Amy's voice trails off and she falls asleep, snoring lightly.

Amy dreams a psychedelic dream of witnessing Sonic combatting his evil mechanic clone on the "little planet." For some reason, though, amidst the chaotic energy blasts, swirling colored mists, and strange lighting, Amy watches them and hopes that Sonic the Hedgehog meets his demise at the cold metal claws of his manufactured nemesis.

Time passes. Amy's fever breaks. The citizens slowly emerge from their subterranean or stoney, old shelters and populate the streets again in big wooden houses. After so many people left, the idea of creating a bustling metropolis without the population to support it was ridiculous. Instead, those who remained opted to have individual homes built, turning the wreckage of Station Square into a humble suburbia.

Things complete, not yet. Many of the nicer homes are under construction. But pleasant, simpler residences in a section of town have been constructed. They were mostly funded by various charities and relief groups, so they lack many of the creature comforts.

But anything's better than being locked up in an old school house that had been flooded a couple months prior.

Amy and Mona are sitting in the school's cafeteria on a sunny Monday afternoon. The area is, as always, filled to the brim. This has become to social center for the flood's survivors who remain. There is, of course, always plenty of food; and although everyone complains about the bland taste of it all, they're all very pleased to have it available. The children, despite the crampedness of the room, enjoy running about and playing inside, and everyone's more willing to talk with their mouth full-even though they ought not to.

"Amy, we've been granted a couple rooms in the house on the east end of town," Mona tells Amy cheerily as she hands her a slightly worn piece of paper from across the table.

Amy reads over the typing. "That's great Mona. Knowing you, I'm sure you'll turn it into a wonderful home in itself."

Mona smiles at Amy, the aged lines of her face crease in a flattering way. "Of course, you're more than welcome to stay with us, Amy."

Amy thinks a moment. She feels inside the pocket of her red dress and touches her fingertips to a folded piece of paper. A day ago-when neither Mona or Archer were around-Amy was delivered a similar letter to the one Mona has just shown her. The government had granted Amy her own space in one of the temporary homes. Amy thinks for a split second, then: "That's terrific! You know, I just hope these government-built houses are better than their filing systems, because I think they lost my application for a space of my own."

Mona chuckles. "Oh, I know, once, Archer never received his tax refund, and you can't imagine the hell he raised over that, despite all the hoops those people at the IRS wanted him to jump through."

The pale orange, odorless macaroni and cheese seems tastier as Mona and Amy eat while they excitedly discuss how they'll decorate their new home.

"Oh! It's so airy," Mona says chipperly as she walks into her new room in the temporary home.

"That's because there's no glass!" Archer tells her irritably. He walks up to a window and pokes his arm through. "See? They were so cheap and so fast making this place they didn't put glass in the windows," He scowls at the hole in the wall and then pulls his arm back in. "This place is an insult! We were better off in that basement! At least THAT had electicity," he adds irritably. With his hands on his hips he looks around the room grumpily. "Do any of YOU see electrical sockets? Anywhere? NO!"

Amy and Mona stare at him for a moment in disbelief. He stares back at them, an exaggerated scowl on his face. Then he runs his hand across his bald head and says: "Is awfully airy and bright in here, though ('course that's probably because the walls aren't painted and there's no carpeting.)"

"Yes, and it will be a fine new home," Mona walks towards one of the three cots in the room and sets down a small ceramic cup-one of the few possessions she still has, it was made by her daughter when she was a child-on the floor next to it. "It usually looks best on a nightstand with a flower or two in it. I'm sure we can take care of the flowers, at least."

"IF that garden they're trying to grow out there takes root," Archer adds, sitting down on one of the cots and pull of his boots.

"I'm sure it will, because I'll be working on it," Mona replies assuredly.

"Oh yeah? I signed up to work on the reconstruction projects. Always need for a good carpenter," he tells her proudly as he pounds his fist on his chest. "And I'm one of the best as you well know," he looks around the room. "Sure wish I could have volunteered to help with this mess."

Amy looks at Archer and Mona sheepishly. "Volunteer? Sign up? When did this happen?"

The smile that was forming on Archer's face because of the friendly exchange with his wife faded as he turned his face to Amy. "You were sick, then. There's nothing you can do."

"Oh, nonsense!" Mona scolds Archer. She looks to Amy. "He is right that you were sick when they were taking volunteers for the various jobs, but there's certainly something you can do. Go talk to the community leader, I believe I saw him on the way in. Older gentleman with red hair and a small scar across his left cheek? He was sitting in a rocking chair on the porch."

"That porch wobbled, Mona."

"Oh that has nothing to with it, Archer! No, Amy, go downstairs and talk to him. See what you can do."

Amy throws open the door to the room and heads down the hall and to the stairway.

"Do you think it's smart to get her doing anything Mona? You haven't forgotten what the other one did to us all, have you?"

"Something for you to do, huh?" The red-haired old man regards Amy, standing before him nervously. "Well, so many people signed up for the more ... productive tasks. Working on new homes, wiring things ... construction, really. Even many of the ladies. Back in the day such a thing was unheard of!"

Amy nods her head dumbly. "Uh-huh."

"You see, everyone's doing all that work."

Not sure where he's going, Amy nods her head again and repeats "Uh-huh."

"But there is some work fit for a nice girl like you."

"Yeah?" Amy leans forward.

"You can babysit."

Title: Run So Fast (Part Two) "Baby Sat"

Based on: Sonic Adventure by Sonic Team for the Sega Dreamcast

Writer: ALM

Written: December 8, 2000

I'd like to apologize for having taken so long. I got a D+ on my politics term paper way back in the Spring semester of 2000, just after posting the first part, and was discouraged from writing anything more. Then I was working. Then more classes. So, yes, this is finally yhe second part. Yes, it is quite short. Yes, it is cliché. No, this is not what I'd originally planned. I think I can still pull off the story well, though. Then I can begin my next fan fiction: Virtua Fighter 3 meets Crazy Taxi! Ooh, yeah!

"You-you've gotta' be kidding, right?" Amy pulls away from him. "I can't possibly--!"

"Nonsense! My daughter was a babysitter at half your age!"

Amy puts her hands on her hips. "Hey, waitaminute, just how old do you think I am?"

"There aren't that many children, maybe ten to fifteen of them," the man continues, his eyes directed somewhere above Amy, a faint, content smile on his lips.

"Yeah, but I mean I've never really bothered with kids before, I'm not sure if--"

"Several of them are orphans, poor things, lost their parents in the flood, they did. Don't really have anyone to care for them now, especially with most of the adults off working on the reconstruction. Who knows what will become of them in the future."

Amy hangs her head. "The guilt trip ... alright, alright, I'll do the babysitting thing," and then, under her breath: "I was really looking forward to using my hammer in the construction sites."

RUN SO FAST a Sonic Adventure fan fiction by ALM#129
Part Two: Mother Amy

Amy's not sure what Archer thinks of her. When she asked him to take time off from the reconstruction efforts, he seemed annoyed. When she explained that she wanted him to HELP her build swings for the kids she had been charged with the care of, his attitude changed dramatically. Was it because he was proud of her, not only for having accepted to duty of looking after these children, but actively pursuing her tasks (she wanted him to help her, not do it all himself)? Or, was it because he wouldn't be building the swings for HER, but for ... humans?

All through the work, he never really seemed happy to be working with Amy, he never really smiled or joked or anything. He worked. He fervently concentrated on the work. At first, he seemed reluctant to let Amy help him. She kept trying to weasel her way into construction, and in time he gave her tasks to do. Unfortunately, the only real skill Amy has with her hands are bashing things with her beloved hammer or handling a pile of shopping bags. She was all thumbs when he told her to cut wood certain ways or when using the screwdriver. At least when it came time to pound some posts into the ground she was able to help, quite effectively at that!

In time, the construction was over. It was a Sunday afternoon in mid-spring, they'd only been at work for a couple weeks. It didn't take a couple weeks to build a swing set. It took a couple weeks to build a playground. Amy was disappointed that she didn't get to help archer as much as she would have liked, but then her responsibilities to the kids came quickly. When the last nail was driven into a wooden tree house ("tree" being a relative term--all the trees had been destroyed in the flood, this was a collection of tall wooden posts) Amy was cramped in there with Archer.

"It's done," he says wearily. "I hope you'll like it."

Amy, sitting cross-legged on the floor of the tree house (and not feeling nearly as sardine-like as Archer) looked around the house with wide, happy eyes. "Oh, yeah, this is the bestest! The kids are going to love it! Heck, I wish I coulda' had a place like this when I was a little hedgehog."

"Did you grow up here in the city?"

"Yeah, in a small apartment, so this is pretty normal for me," she slaps her palm down on the floor. "Except the air's a lot fresher," and she beams Archer a smile.

"I grew up on a farm, so did our daughter, my wife and I only came to the city a few years ago. I had built a tree house like this for her when she was a child. I think I did it for her seventh birthday," Then he suddenly adds: "We didn't really have the time to make many friends. I guess that's why we're not as depressed over what happened as some other folks are."

Amy eyes Archer cautiously. The conversation had just taken a much more graven tone. She thought a moment about what to say next: "I want to introduce the kids to this place to the kids tomorrow morning. They're going nuts with me keeping them away from this area, and always promising them a big surprise here."

"Would you like Mona and I to be here with you? We could turn it into an event," Archer suggests with more enthusiasm than Amy expected.

"Yeah! Don't we have balloons somewhere? And some fruit punch! We could really make it a treat for the kids!"

Archer responds almost nostalgically. "Yes, like a birthday party."

It's called the orphanage. It's best described as one of the saddest places on earth. Schools in the city had been built some time ago, at a time during a cold war that was expected to drop such powerful bombs that only the most secure buildings would last. Those same schools ended up being among the select structures that survived the flood relatively well. In contrast, many of the prominent business buildings in the city were new and emphasized flash and style over robustness. As a result, when the flood hit, many of the children in the schools survived. The parents at their jobs did not. Most computer systems and people who may have been able to help identify the children were lost as well. As a result, in the chaos after Chaos, many children were not only left without parents, but authorities were left scratching their heads as they couldn't even begin to identify the terrified youngsters and find relatives elsewhere to send them. Those kids, who would probably never be able to connect to their families for a long time-if ever-were now in the orphanage.

The orphanage is a wing in one of the surviving hospitals, which are no longer as packed as they were immediately after the flood. This one is located near the collection of cheaply constructed single-family homes that were erected around the area that used to be the center of the city. There are a lot of windows and workers went through great effort to clean the area up so as it make it more inviting for the children.

When Amy assumed responsibility for their care, she was quite shocked to find the stark white walls of the hospital. Always having been healthy, and lucky to have Sonic at her side, Amy never had to be in a hospital before ... and the sight of blood has always had adverse effects on her constitution.

"How boring!" Amy remarked as she strolled down the hallway with Mona by her side.

"Oh, yes, these poor kids. I hope the view out their windows are more entertaining, this place seems so lifeless." Mona added, wringing her hands. She turned to Amy and said: "I'm very proud of you for taking this duty. The last person in charge, I believe she was a Ms. Bulmer, had to leave for personal reasons. It would be so awful if these children were to be left alone anymore."

Still concentrating on the walls Amy mumbled: "It reminds me of this dream I had when I was younger: I was in an all-white, square room and whenever I tried to walk towards the corner the room got bigger and I never got there. Very boring dream, scary, in a way, I guess," Amy shrugged.

Mona stifled a laugh. "It does raise a good point, though, can you imagine how these children feel being cooped up in here all this time with the hospital looking like this? It's like a ghost town."

Now, Monday morning, Amy runs down the same hall. The walls are no longer the barren, dull white as when she first came. Now they're alive with finger-painted giraffes, spaceships, maidens, a funny looking purple jester, and ... Amy stops a moment and examines a blue splotch on the wall. "Sonic," she says wistfully as she lays her hand on the image of him. She shakes her head and continues her dash to the orphanage.

"WAKE UP! WAKE UP! WAKE UP!" Amy shouts at the top of her lungs as she bursts into the room, throwing the doors open. The routine is familiar to a couple of kids now, and she finds herself pelted with pillows by the several of the kids, who had been sitting on their beds in wait. Amy drops to the floor and makes a pathetic whimper. "Oh, you got's me!" Then she sticks her tongue out and closes her eyes, as she plays dead.

One boy, Dane, stands over Amy. "You're a minute late," he grunts at her as he points to an analog clock on the opposite wall.

Amy opens an eye and looks at him incredulously. "Uhm, sorry," she sits up and looks around the room.

Amy shouts at the kids: "Today's a big day!"

"HAM PANCAKE DAY!" A boy yelps excitedly as he bounces on his bed.

"Oh, no, not the ham pancakes again," Dane rubs his forehead as he turns back to his bed.

"There's nothing wrong with Ms. Rose's ham pancakes," a girl, Raz, defends Amy as she kneels beside her and retrieves a pillow from the floor. "Besides the fact that they're ham pancakes."

Amy twiddles her fingers. "I was always rather fond of ham pancakes. I suppose you guys would prefer blueberry or something. I just figure you need protein or something," she says to herself. Then, getting to her feet and swiping at her dress she remarks: "Anyway, 'Coyote' over there seems to like the ham pancakes."

"He just likes the ham," Raz corrects Amy with a smirk as she returns to her bed.

"Fitting, when you consider his nickname, no?" Dane observes in a droll tone.

"Maybe if I put some cheese into the pancakes it would work with the ham to enhance the flavor," Amy wonders aloud. Then gets struck down by another volley of pillows.

"If you're going to put ham and cheese in it you may as well just make an omelet."

"But Wednesday is omelet day!" Coyote objects.

Raz covers herself with her blanket and then moans: "No, not the blueberry omelets!"

To Be Continued ...

THIS STORY WAS NEVER FINISHED! I had written MOST of the final part, but I was never satisfied with the conclusion I wrote, and I kept on changing it so the situation would seem less forced. Here it is in all its incomplete and never posted glory.

Run So Fast: A Sonic Adventure Fan Fiction
Part 3 (of 3): True Blue Hero by ALM

"This is too scary!" Coyote whimpers to Amy as he peers down the slide in the playground that Amy and Archer had built. "I'm too high up. I'm scared! I can't go down!"

"Well, you've already climbed up there. It'd be pretty tough to climb down backwards. Trust me, going down the slide will be fun," Amy pauses. Coyote, gripping the rails of the ladder tightly with his little body trembling in fear looks over his shoulder, down at Amy, and sees her smiling at him. "I promise you won't get hurt. If you'd like, I'll go down with you, but we'll have to be careful."

"Having more than one person go down a slide at once is, in fact, more dangerous than whatever Coyote is frightened of," Dane remarks snidely, watching the scene with detached interest. "AGHK!" He yelps as he's struck with a pebble at the back of his head. Rubbing the spot he turns around and sees Raz giving him the raspberry. He scowls at her and returns to watching Amy try to encourage Coyote to go through with riding the slide down. He mumbles: "Children" to himself with bitter superiority.

"Why did you two make such an awfully tall slide, Archer?" Mona asks her husband, holding a pitcher of lemonade in her hand. She, Archer, and Amy had turned the unveiling of the playground into a grand event for the children this fine Monday afternoon. They'd made lemonade, prepared

sandwiches, and even managed to procure some ice cream for them. Mona and Archer both remarked that on this day, the skies seemed bluer, the air fresher, and the sun brighter than any day since the flood.

"That's a very good question," Archer rubs his chin as he watches Coyote, on the verge of tears, looking down the slide in complete terror.

Another boy, Phillip, standing at the base of the slide's ladder looks up with a leering grin. "Don't rush Coyote, Amy, it's okay by me if I have to stand here all day waiting to use the slide!"

Amy pauses moment and considers what he said, then looks down at him and scowls. She looks off at Raz and nods her head at her, then returns to dealing with Dane. She's pleased when she hears Phillip shout in pain after being hit by another of Raz's pebbles. "It'll be alright Coyote. I'll climb up to you and we can go down the slide together. Just hold tight to the ladder and be careful." Amy slowly makes her way up the ladder, hearing the boy whimper at the top of the slide. She gets beside him and looks him in the eyes, seeing the tears streaked against his cheeks. "I used to be afraid of stuff like heights too," she whispers to him. "But you can learn to not be afraid of these kinds of things if you just be willing to face them."

Coyote nods his head slowly, a dour look on his face.

"It's really easy if you have a friend help you. You want me to help you?"

Coyote nods again, a slightly more confident look on his face.

"Okay, you just turn around here and keep holding tight on the railing. I'll take a seat right here, and then you sit in my lap, okay?" Amy smiles at him warmly. She sits down on the slide, still holding the bars, and the boy maneuvers himself to sit in her lap. He presses his back against her, and with trembling arms tightly grips the sides of the slide. Amy holds him close, crossing her arms over his chest. She cranes her neck forward and speaks into his ear with a slight laugh: "We can't go down until you let go of the sides of the slide. Once you feel you're ready, we can go down."

Coyote bites his lower lip and looks around the playground. He sees all the kids and the two adults, Archer and Mona, watching him. Raz gives Coyote encouraging thumbs up. Coyote automatically removes his hands from the side of the slide to respond with his own thumbs up. Before he's realized his folly he's speeding down the slide with Amy. The world breezes by him and excitement builds inside. Coyote throws up his arms, accidentally smacking Amy's face with the back of his hands, and shouts with glee, as he zips downward.

Unfortunately, being a rookie slider, and Amy being distracted from the unintentional assault she suffered from Coyote, both of the sliders fail to tend to the end of their ride. Neither plants their feet on the ground as they hit the bottom of the slide and as a result the two going flying off together, tumbling into a collection of shrubs some distance from the slide. Coyote is tangled up in the bush, Amy bursts through it head first and bashes her head into a mound of dirt. The pile explodes and she ploughs through it and scatters golden rings all over the area. Amy coughs as a cloud of dust settles over her. She lies on the ground wearily, listening to the rings bouncing over the grass.

"That was the bestest!" Coyote exclaims as Mona and Archer run to the bush and pull him out.

Raz and Dane go to Amy and kneel beside her. "Are you okay Ms. Rose?" Raz asks her. Amy weakly gives her a thumbs up. "Look at all those rings! There must be a couple dozen of them around here. Where did they come from?"

"They were buried under a mound of dirt. They probably got collected there and covered by mud during the flood." Dane thinks aloud as he counts the rings by pointing to them. "There's thirty-six, actually."

"OH WOW! GOLDEN RINGS!" Amy hears Coyote shout, then hurry over to them and start collecting them in his hands. "They're so shiny and round!"

Mona and Archer approach Amy and help her to her feet. She swipes the dirt from her dress and adjusts her hair.

"We barely had time to see if he had any scratches," Mona comments to Amy. "Before he ran off to gather the rings."

"Ah, he's a boy, he's probably fine," Archer says proudly.

Amy watches Coyote run around the field gathering the golden rings. Cupping them in his hands he carefully steps over to Amy and presents them to her. "Here you go Amy, you found them! And you always liked jeweleries! And thanks for helping me with the slide!" He holds up the rings to her, cupped in his young hands.

Amy looks at them and is choked for a moment, as they remind her so much of all her exploits with Sonic. She lets out a deep sigh and takes them Coyote, placing them in the pocket of her dress, and kisses the boy on the forehead as she tells him: "Thank you."

The next day ...

"All he ever does is go up and down and up and down and up and down--"

"That's what we smart kids would call a pattern," Dane taunts Phillip and he condescendingly pats him on the head.

"It's all he's done today! It's really boring."

"Well why are you depending on a kid like Coyote for entertainment."

"It's a playground! What made Amy think big kids like us would really have any interest in this? I mean, she's older than we are! She should have known better."

"Raz seems to be enjoying the playground. She's been on the swings all morning with Amy."

"Well they're just girls!"

Dane shakes his head. "Yes, yes they are."

Phillip, sitting with his feet up on the bench "Still, being out here is better than being cooped up in that hospital."

"It's too depressing in there. It always smells like ..."

"Death," Phillip adds with finality. The two sit in silence for a while. They don't hear the laughing of Amy and Raz, nor do they hear the clumsy clatter of Coyote climbing to the top of the slide and the sound of him swooping down. They are caught in thoughts of death and cold and water.

"What were your parents like?" Dane asks Phillip, staring forward.

"My parents were divorced. I haven't really seen my mom before. She probably doesn't even know I was living in this city. My dad was a lawyer."

"What do you call a hundred lawyers at the bottom of the-" Dane begins reflexively, hoping to lighten the mood between them. He stops momentarily and looks down at the ground. "I'm sorry, that was very wrong of me," he apologizes with a lump in his throat.

Coyote comes running up to Dane and Phillip, his arms outstretched as he does a raspberry with his mouth to imitate the sound of an engine. "My daddy flew planes! Big ones! He was probably in the air when the toilet overflowed and so he'll be back for me soon!"

Phillip scratches his head. "Toilet overflowed?"

"Yeah, this one time I put all this toilet paper into the toilet because I saw this big bug in there and didn't want it to come out and eat me so I put all the toilet paper in the toilet to keep it from coming out and eating me and I flushed the toilet! My daddy was really angry with me but it was alright he just didn't know I protected him from the bug too!" Coyote pauses a moment. "I wonder where the giant toilet that flooded the city was?"

Dane stifles a laugh. Depressing as the situation may be the child's rambling is hilarious to him. He and Phillip stare at each other, barely containing themselves, and the strained expressions on their faces are enough to cause them to erupt in laughter. Phillip just stares at them, puzzled, and then runs off, imitating a plane.

Night, several days later ...

"I hafta' go to the bathroom," Coyote groggily tells Raz.

Raz pulls the covers over her head and turns away, muttering a curse.

Coyote rubs his eyes and then pokes Raz in the back. "I really hafta' go!" He repeats in a whinier tone.

"You know the way."

"It's dark! I don't wanna' be walkin' alone in the dark." He pokes her in the back again.

"Ugh ... oKAY already. I'll take you to the bathroom," she grunts as she rolls out of the bed runs her hands through her hair to straighten it and get it out of her eyes. She gets to her feet and steps over to the little boy. "Take my hand," she orders him and grumpily leads him out of the children's ward where all the orphaned children have been sleeping

since the flood and takes him down the dark hall of the hospital to the nearest rest room. "Here we are," she stops before the door with the universal symbol for men. "Take care of business, and be quick about it!"

"Thankyou!" Coyote shouts as he dashes into the lavatory, which was restored after the flood for the children's use.

Raz hears him close a door stall. She leans her back against the wall next to the door with her arms folded over her chest. "You know, I was having this really great dream! I was in this beautiful place with lush green grass, beaches, and water everywhere. I was flying around ... it was great!" Raz fights closing her eyes, she's very tired. "But I didn't get to see the dream through, though. Nu-uh. I'm here, listening to you go to the bathroom."

Inside, little Coyote is sitting on the toilet bowl in one of the stalls. He hears Raz grumbling on the other side, but can't quite make out her words. He's making great effort to 'finish his business.' As he's sitting there, hearing Raz's ranting on the other side of the door, and the repeating dripping of one of the sinks' faucets, he slowly becomes aware of another sound growing louder and nearer. Coyote perks up curiously. He jumps from the toilet bowl, pulling his pants back on, and runs over to the lavatory window. He looks out and sees a large cargo plane passing over heard, low in the sky. It's preparing to land!

"I knew my daddy'd be back!" Coyote says to himself as he leans forward, pressing his hands against the windowsill. "I have to see him!" Coyote says, louder, as he throws open the window and bounds out to the ground below with a low thud. Struggling to hold up his pajama pants he begins running across the hospital's lawn in pursuit of the descending plane.

Raz knocks twice on the door of the men's room. After pausing a moment, she cracks it open and calls in: "How much longer do you thin you're going to be?" Not hearing a response she enters the lavatory and looks around. "Oh ... my ... god!" She gasps, seeing the open window of the Coyote-less restroom. Gripping the windowsill Raz yells out Coyote's name, but hears no response and doesn't see him anywhere. Looking to the woods just beyond the Hospital's lawn she knows that Coyote has been lost. As she stumbles out of the men's room she sees Phillip and Dane standing in the hallway.

"What are you doing in the boys' bathroom, Raz?"

"Where's Coyote?"

Raz grabs Dane's shoulders and says gravely: "We have to get to Amy NOW."

Minutes later, after running from the Hospital to the apartment building where Amy still lives with Mona and Archer, the kids burst into Amy's room yelling excitedly.

"Amy! Amy! Coyote has disappeared!" Phillip shouts at her.

Amy rubs her eyes and shoves him off her bed. "The three of you, please, quiet down! What's going on?!"

Raz repentantly stands in Amy's doorway. "It's all my fault, Amy. I'm so sorry. He woke me up to have me take him to the bathroom, and I was

waiting outside, but I didn't hear anything from him for a while and then I went in to make sure he was okay but the room was empty! I think he ran away."

"It looks like he jumped out of the window and went into the woods," Phillip adds.

Amy runs her hand across her head in frustration. "Why would he do that? Isn't he afraid of the dark? Where would he go?"

"What's going on in here, kids? Is everything okay?" Mona asks the group as she stands behind Raz.

"No, the kids just came here and told me that Coyote ran away!" Amy tells Mona.

"That's terrible! Oh, goodness, I wish Archer were here. He could help us."

Amy looks at Mona inquisitively. "Where's Archer?"

"He's at that big construction site, just a couple miles away from the hospital."

The children and Amy exchange looks.

"They were supposed to receive a big shipment of materials tonight. It's coming by plane because they haven't finished repairing the railways around here," Mona adds.

"That stupid cargo plane that woke me up!" Phillip realizes, snapping his fingers.

"Yes, it passed right over the hospital at the same time the two of you were in the rest room! Coyote's father was a pilot, and he was pretty convinced he'd return here soon," Dane adds.

"So, you think Coyote is following the plane to the construction site?"

"Or wherever that plane is landing."

Mona rubs her chin in thought. "As I remember, the landing strip they made was a bit beyond the actual construction site. Coyote would have to pass through there to get to the plane."

"Assuming he even makes it through the woods. It's not too cold out tonight, but he's still barefoot and in his pajamas," Dane observes.

"Humm," Amy nods her head. "I need the four of you to get some flashlights and jackets and look for him in the woods. I'll go to the construction site and get the workers there to help me out," Amy gets out of bed and throws on her red dress, a jacket, and slips into her sneakers. She turns to her friends. "Good luck guys!" With that she runs out of the apartment and down the stairs. Bursting out the front door she leaps up into the air and onto the community moped. Turning the ignition she begins buzzing down the road towards the construction site.

Since it's late at night, Amy finds no security at the gate of the construction site. "Skeleton crew, or something," she mutters to herself

as she swings open the chain link gate. "Coyote!" Amy calls out, hoping to attract either the missing child's attention or that of one of the workers. She continues to wander into the site, looking around herself. "I expected this place to be better lit, I wish I had brought a flashlight with me!"

"Hey, I thought I heard someone over here!" Amy hears a voice off in the distance. Moments later, she sees a point of light bobbing up and down as the flashlight holder runs towards her.

"Hey! You can't be here this late at night!" A man in a yellow hard hat yells at Amy as he shines light directly in her face. His partner stands beside him.

Amy winces and covers her eyes with her hand. "I'm Amy Rose, I'm looking for a little boy! I think he's come through here!"

"Why'd he come through here so late at night?"

"I think he was chasing the plane that came down here a while ago."

The two men look at each other. "The shipment?" They then turn to Amy. "Yeah, the cargo plane came down just over there," one of them indicates the area behind him "about a mile from here."

"We'll take you over there in our truck," one of them begins as he grabs Amy by the arm.

Amy forces herself away. "No, I don't think the kid moved that fast! He's either in the woods over there, or he's here in the construction site. We need to look for him here."

"It'd be pretty dangerous if he's loose in the construction site."

Amy scowls at the man. "Look, I need your help. Can't you turn some lights on around here?"

"Oh, yeah, give me a second," one of the workers says. He pulls a walkie-talkie from his belt and begins speaking into it: "Is anyone at the office? Hey! Anyone at the office?"

"Yeah," someone responds. Amy recognizes the voice as Archer's.

"Hey, there's a girl hedgehog here--"

"AMY?!"

"Yeah, you know her ...? Oh yeah! The kid you and Mona have been living with!" The worker momentarily covers the walkie-talkie and leans towards Amy. "He doesn't stop talking about you! I'm sorry I didn't make the connection at first."

Amy blushes.

"Anyway, Amy says that one of the kids she's been taking care of ran off and probably wandered into the construction site. Could you flip the switches and get us some light over here?"

"Oh, sure! Amy, I'll be down in a minute to help you out looking for the

kid. I'll get everyone here to help. I wouldn't want anyone getting hurt. I'll even pull the guys from the cargo we've just received."

"Thanks, Archer."

The area floods with lights. Amy looks around the construction site. She hears a startled gasp beside her and turns to see one of the workmen pointing up. Amy looks in the direction his finger is directed and sees the small figure of Coyote, shivering and desperately grasping a beam several stories up!

"OH MY GOD!" A scream is heard some distance away. Everyone turns to the direction of a worker standing by the giant hole in the ground that had been dug for the foundation of the new building.

"He's down here!"

Praise & Criticism for Run So Fast:

From: Smiley (Smiley13@earthlink.net)
Subject: Re: [FanFic] Run So Fast

View this article only
Newsgroups: alt.fan.sonic-hedgehog
Date: 2000/03/27

moc.moorsserp@m1a (ALM) attracted the endless rambling of Smiley in message <38d6db52.1555164@news.pressroom.com>. Have you had your non-sequitur shots?

<story snipped>

...wow.

An SA adaptation (well, not really) that's really, really good. I'm not sure where you're going with it, but it's off to a great start. Very adult, very interesting, not to mention you're dealing with unresolved issues from the end of SA very well. Are you going to use the Burning Rangers, or was it just a reference for Saturn fans? It seems a little awkward to have them in the background without really contributing anything. Still, that's a minor quip.

Again, I'm not sure where you're going, but I want to see more...

-Smiley

From: Cameron Kerlin (webmaster@darkmanga.cjb.net)
Subject: Re: [FANFIC] Run So Fast (Part One, Complete)

View this article only
Newsgroups: alt.fan.sonic-hedgehog
Date: 2000/04/21

<snip of fic>

Okay, everyone here knows I never read FanFiction, but I read this. I was just clicking through posts, and the first line of this message caught my eye for whatever reason...and I was hooked. This was excellent. Even if it doesn't fit to my rigid standards for SegaSonic or nothin', it's still pretty damn close. And pretty damn good. The style was great, and the insight to a character that was never really developed well (Amy) was very

realistic. I'll be in line for the next part.

--

Late one scary night, Cameron A. Kerlin stayed up and watched horridly gory zombie movies, and then suddenly, the ZOMBIE SIG was born!!!!

=====
-Caaamerooon Uaaaaahhh Keerliiininn.....
-Uaaagghhhmaaiilll: webmaster@darkmanga.cjb.net
-Daaaaark Maaaangaaahh....(braaaainsssss....) Aaaart
aaaaaand Whebbbppttt Desigghgnnn...http://www.darkmanga.cjb.net
-Glaaaagghhhh.....::shambles::
-Ovurrr 1,300 poooosts to alt.fan.sonic-hedg...hedge...hedgehogg
-Oooofishulllll AFSH zommmmbieeee.....
-"Uuuuuuaagghhhh....." --a Zombie (Day of the Dead)
-"Braainnnss..!" --a Zombie (Return of the Living Dead)

=====
Billy: "Hey, you know what I was thinking of doing with our RPG?"
Me: "What?"
Billy: "A zombie RPG!"
Me: "That would KICK ASS!!!"
=====